

BANDWAGON

The Journal of the Circus Historical Society

January-February 1996



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THIS MONTH'S COVER

The cover photo shows Ringling-Barnum Circus wardrobe wagon No. 64 coming down the runs in 1941. The original is in the Pfening Archives.

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1996 CHS CONVENTION

Complete details about the 1996 Circus Historical Society convention appear on page 19 of this issue.

A registration card is enclosed.

NEW DIRECTORY AVAILABLE

A new 1996 directory of Circus Historical Society members is now available. Active CHS members can receive a copy by sending \$1 for postage to Bandwagon, 2515 Dorset Rd. Columbus, Ohio 43221.

CORRECTION

Caption woes! In Richard Reynolds' *Venice, Florida And The Circus, Part II* (November-December, 1995 issue) the two photo captions at the top of page 13 were transposed. The Warren flat car pictured on pages 14 and 15 was No. 244 (not 224 as stated in the captions). The photo on page 16 was of the last run in 1959 (not 1958).

In the text of the article itself, a word was omitted halfway down the first paragraph on page 9. The phrase in ques-

tion should have read: "... but that may be a difference between then and now."

On page 12, a line was dropped at the end of the first column. The text should have read: "A train comprised of 15 Ringling-Barnum owned cars (8 flats, 4 stocks, 3 sleepers), plus a system baggage car rolled out of Sarasota on March 28th to begin the 1957 season."

The first two lines in column 1 on page 13 were inverted. They should have read: "Susie), that had been born in Sarasota quarters on February 23, 1958."

Finally, also on page 13 (2nd col.), it was erroneously stated that Thrall flat car No. 241 was sold to Royal American in 1959. It was No. 233 (not 241) that went with No. 229.

ELECTION RESULTS

Votes cast: 136. Ruined: 20

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1967-July-Aug., Nov.-Dec.

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1972-All available.

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1977-All but Mar.-Ap.

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1979-All but Jan.-Feb.

1980-1986-All available.

1987-All but Nov.-Dec.

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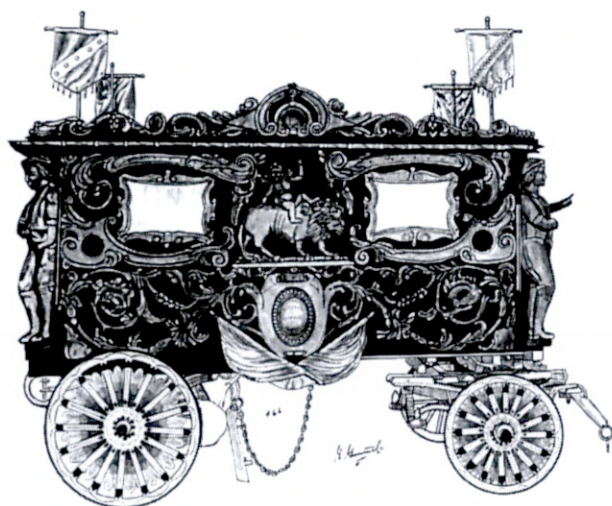
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The wild west performance was a unique phenomenon in American outdoor show business.

The first wild west show occurred on July 4, 1882 in North Platt, Nebraska as an educational exhibition. Col. William F. Cody originated the show as a glorious celebration to illustrate early frontier days by reenacting scenes in which the hardy pioneers had lived as rugged fighting patriots of the west.

The wild west exhibition as created by Cody was so original and emphatic in presentation that it was thoroughly embraced by the public. The organization of the Buffalo Bill Wild West as a traveling show took place in Columbus, Nebraska in the spring of 1883. The first performance was given in Omaha in May of that year. During the first season the performance was given in fair grounds. In following seasons the show was presented in a three sided canvas canopy covering the seats surrounding a large open arena. From that time on wild west shows were generally presented in the open and not under a big top.

Following the success of the Cody organization other outdoor showmen turned to the wild west format.

In the late 1880s Gordon W. Lillie organized the Pawnee Bill Wild West. By 1899 his show traveled on twenty-one railroad cars. In 1909 the Pawnee Bill and Buffalo Bill shows were combined.

The period from 1910 to 1914 was the apex of the wild west show. At least twenty-two of them hit the road in 1911. They ranged in size from large rail organizations to small wagon operas. That year wild west shows toured using colorful titles such as Young Buffalo, Indian Pete's, Dickey's Circle D, California Frank, Broncho Bob, Idaho Bill, and King Carlos. The Welsh Bros. used some of their circus equipment on a ten car show called Prairie Lillie & Nebraska Bill. Miller Bros. 101 Ranch used twenty-seven cars. Buffalo Bill & Pawnee Bill was the largest, traveling on fifty-nine cars.

Kit Carson's Buffalo Ranch Wild West and Circus, owned by Thomas F. Wiedemann, was another touring horse opera.

Wiedemann was born in 1872. By age twenty he had joined out with the Kempton Comedy Company. After twelve years he was the owner of that tented dramatic

Kit Carson's Buffalo Ranch Wild West and Circus

Seasons of 1911 to 1914

By Fred D. Pfening, Jr.

troupe. The first record of Wiedemann's Big Show appeared in the December 28, 1901 New York *Clipper* when he advertised for help.

In 1906 and 1907 he toured a two car wild west show using the Wiedemann Bros. Big Kit Carson Shows title. In 1908, 1909 and 1910 it was called Wiedemann's Big American Shows, Cosmopolitan Rough Riders and Indian Congress. Wiedemann was a showman of the Joe B. MacMahon school, openly using games of chance on his midway and employing short change artists. He garnered a reputation for operating one of the toughest shows on the road.

At the end of the 1910 season Wiedemann was ready to seriously enlarge his operation. He bought six cars and seven wagons from the M. L. Clark Circus.

This was the start of his buying. He

The Kit Carson Buffalo Ranch Wild West color courier used in 1913. Circus World Museum collection.

advertised for a stock car and more wagons.

On November 12, 1910 Wiedemann bought the fourteen car Jones Bros. Buffalo Ranch Wild West show from J. Augustus Jones. The equipment was shipped to Wiedemann's quarters in Harrisburg, Illinois. The title was changed to Kit Carson's Buffalo Ranch Wild West.

The Sells & Downs steam calliope was not included in

the purchase from Jones. Wiedemann needed a steamer for his 1911 parade. He located a crude box type wagon with a single oval hole in each side. A steam calliope was found and mounted in the wagon.

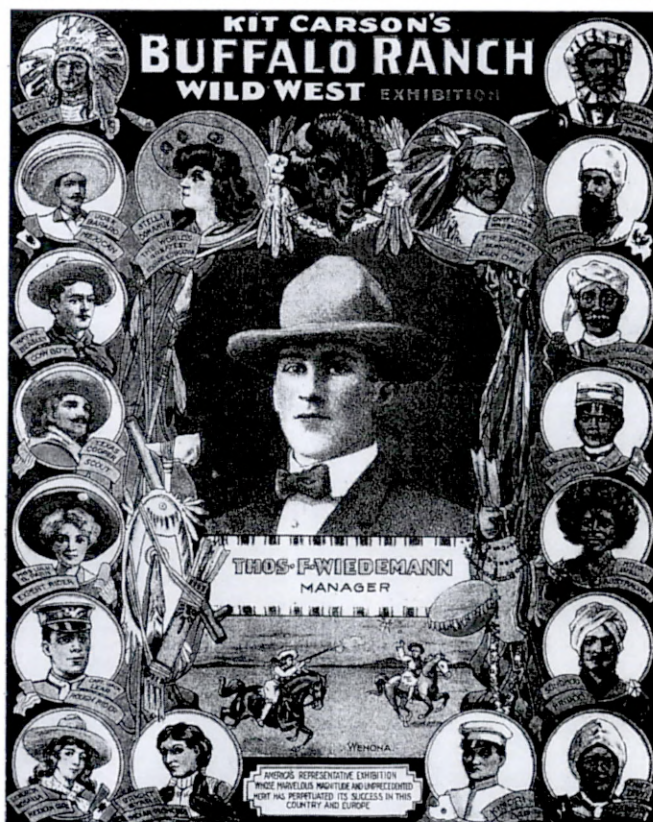
The first *Billboard* reference to the new show appeared in the February 18 issue: "Harrisburg, Illinois. Work has progressed rapidly at the winter quarters of Wiedemann Bros. show the last few weeks, owing to the pleasant weather. Larry Egan, who will have the canvas next season, has charge of all the men and is getting things in first class shape."

Wiedemann continued to gather equipment. In February 1911 he went to William P. Hall's circus store in Lancaster, Missouri, buying several baggage wagons, two flat cars, two elephants, a camel and eight draft horses. Hall had bought the two elephants earlier from Jerry Mugivan. A bit short on money by then Wiedemann made a down payment and signed a note for the balance.

The April 15 *Billboard* noted: "Comprising the roster of the No. 2 car of Kit Carson's Buffalo Ranch are: Joe C. Donahue, general agent and railroad contractor; J. M. Richardson, local contractor; Victor J. Foster, car manager; Harry Read, boss billposter, assisted by Cliff Radfield, Will Chapman, Harry Beltz, James Mack, Louis Rippie, John Reagon, George Murphy, Beard, Harry Brown, Kingherz, Will Morton and Ed Akers; Charles Spade and Mark Kall, lithographers; Mark Kall and Ed Ashbrook, programmers; Curant Ray, porter."

The opening date is unknown, but would have been around April 1 in Harrisburg. The first *Billboard* listing of the route placed the show in Mound City, Illinois on April 17.

Railroad contracts for the Carson show in Wisconsin listed fourteen cars, six flats, three stocks, four coaches and one advertising car.



The Wiedemann performance differed from most wild west shows of that period in that it presented a combined circus and wild west. The traditional canopy canvas gave way to a standard circus big top. The performance featured many outstanding circus and trained animal acts. The show paraded every day.

The 1911 show had two elephants, two camels, fifty head of baggage stock and sixty head of ring and wild west stock. The canvas included a 120 foot big top with three 30s and a 40 and a 70 foot side show top with three 30s.

The Carson show presented a respectable parade with a bandwagon, tableaux and plenty of mounted riders, mainly wild west people.

The No. 1 bandwagon was highly carved with a lion on each side. It had first appeared on Martin Downs' Sells & Downs Circus about 1902. J. Augustus Jones bought the wagon in 1910 for his Buffalo Ranch Wild West that year.

The Carson show played up a big free attraction in advance newspaper handouts. A Harrisburg (Illinois) *Chronicle* article was passed out at all towns on the route: "They have it and it flies. Ever since the Kit Carson show billed that they would exhibit a Curtis-Farnum Biplane and that it would actually make a flight propelled by a competent aviator, nothing but doubt existed in the minds of the public, which had not entirely forgotten that last year a show advertised a like attraction and only exhibited a small aeroplane model in their show. However, Harrisburg was filled with people last Saturday, in fact the largest crowd ever congregated in the county was present to witness the street parade. After reaching the grounds at 11:30 promptly as advertised the aeroplane rose from the ground like a majestic bird and soared away in the heavens, flying over the city. After remaining in the air ten minutes it landed safely at the place of starting."

By May 1 the show was in Aurora, Missouri and entered Kansas at Columbus on May 2. The show immediately ran in opposition from Campbell Bros. Circus. Campbell played Lyons, Kansas on May 3 and Carson on May 5. The Columbus *Daily Advocate* carried this front page article: "With one elephant missing from its herd the Kit Carson Wild West pulled into Columbus over the Frisco in a special train of eighteen cars at 6 o'clock this morning from Aurora, Missouri. The elephant that was missing from the big

GRAND FREE AEROPLANE FLIGHTS

BY A CURTIS-FARNUM BIPLANE DAILY



EXTRA ATTRACTION

× WITH ×

Kit Carson's Buffalo Ranch BIG THREE RING WILD WEST CIRCUS

The free aeroplane flights as advertised in a 1911 Carson herald. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives unless otherwise credited.

show was a little animal called Monte, which was shot Sunday night in Dixon, Missouri after it had killed James Hildebrand, its trainer.

"The tragedy came while Hildebrand was endeavoring to put Monte into a car. Without warning the elephant became enraged, and, wrapping its trunk around the trainer's body, lifted him high in the air. Hildebrand screamed for help when Monte dashed the man to the ground. It is believed he was killed instantly.

"Attaches of the show ran to the rescue with pitchforks, and drove the elephant from its victim. It was not subdued until its sides were streaming with blood from the goads. Immediately after the tragedy the elephant was shot under orders of the show management."

After the show left town, the Columbus *Advocate* of May 4 noted that the reserve seat man inside the main

The Kit Carson No. 1 bandwagon, originally built for Martin Downs.



tent had short changed a local man. The paper added: "The venerable shell game and a wheel of fortune were worked in a side show tent until Doc Hutchins approached. An attache of the show met the marshal at the door and asked him what he wanted. Doc Hutchins wanted to see the manager of the side show. The circus man pushed Doc back from the door. By the time Doc and the circus man had their little case argued out at the door, the shell game and the wheel of fortune inside were covered."

Wiedemann wrote William P. Hall on May 8 from Jetmore, Kansas: "In answer to your letter of the 3rd, I will keep the two elephants at the figure name \$50.00 per week and you pay the keeper. Enclosed find check for \$29.50 which is the balance up to the week ending May 6th. I will pay your boy Ellison \$5 each week. We killed the other elephant here yesterday, we couldn't trade him and he was so mean that we couldn't do anything with him."

Wiedemann not only didn't pay the elephant trainer, he sent him home in a pine box. The May 6, 1911 New York *Clipper* reported: "On April 28 in Dixon, Missouri, James Hilderbrand, of Lancaster, Missouri, elephant trainer with Kit Carson, was killed while endeavoring to put Monte, the show's smallest elephant into a car. The elephant was killed by the management of the show."

The *Billboard* reported a replacement elephant had been received. Early in the season Wiedemann sent Hall \$500 as a first payment on the horses and rent on the elephants.

The Carson show played Augusta, Kansas on May 4 and the *Daily Gazette* wrote: "The big show did not get here until 10 o'clock this morning because of a little wreck near Neodesha where the wild west show played yesterday. The late arrival caused a late parade.

"Many of the wagons and tableaux were drawn by four, six and eight horses."

The next day the *Gazette* noted: "Several men in town are sadder for the coming of Kit Carson's show." They were victims of a shell game.

The Kit Carson 1911 tour suffered a serious blow down early in the season. The May 27 New York *Clipper* reported a Kansas cyclone blew down all the Carson tents except the menagerie at Stafford, Kansas on May 10. That week's *Billboard* mentioned that the high wind came at the close of the afternoon performance and that a



large crowd was in the kid top at the time, but luckily no one was seriously injured.

On May 12 the *Augusta Journal* noted: "A Rotten show.

"The wild west show in Augusta, Thursday, was a disappointment to many. It did not receive any advertising space from this paper at any price. The very best compliment we have heard is that it was fair, given in an apologetic tone, while others described it in one word, rotten. The Curtis-Farnum biplane was here only in imagination. The advertising man was particular to explain that the show started out with one, but it had met with an accident and had been sent to Chicago for repairs."

The *Jetmore, Republican* of May 12 told a second elephant being killed on the Carson show: "Jetmore can now boast of a real elephant killing that took place last Sunday. Probably the only elephant that was killed in Kansas.

"The Kit Carson Wild West show had an elephant that became vicious and unmanageable and soon after the arrival of the show here last Sunday morning he was chocked down and shot, after which his body was buried. He was a young elephant, being about nine years old and had killed four trainers, the last one at Macon, Missouri, two weeks ago today, since which time they kept him chained up in a car not daring to take him out because of his bad disposition. The elephant weighed about two tons and was valued at \$2,500."

The report of a second elephant being killed is con-

Letterhead used by Tom Wiedemann in 1911. The brother Joe was probably Joe Donahue, his long-time agent.

fusing as the *Lerner, Kansas Tiller & Toiler* of May 12 told of two elephants being in the parade. The same issue told of losing two elephants.

The May 18 *Kinsley Graphic* gave the show a favorable notice following the stand there on May 11: "The Kit Carson wild west show that was here last Thursday was a good, clean entertaining company. Their evening show was particularly attractive, as the performance was given in a canvas ring instead of a tent. Their day here was fine, and at its close the crowd gathered, with the star-filled sky above them, and on the west the evening star giving a side show of its own.

"The show is full of life and color of a Western tournament with leather armor and sombreros instead of the tinsplate covering that the feudal knights wore. The riding, the Indian and cowboy

The Carson big top pole wagon coming down the runs in 1911.



features, and the Cossack horsemanship were all a part of a delightful and distinctly Western entertainment." It appears that the show was side walled in Kinsley.

The May 19 *Dodge City, Kansas Journal* noted that: "The Kit Carson wild west show brought a big crowd to town Friday. The wild west feature was unusually good. Many were disappointed because the promised airship was not evident. The rain in the evening stopped the show." The show continued to tout the Curtis-Farnum biplane with no intention of producing it.

Following the stand in Garden City, Kansas the *Herald* published this afterblast: "The wild west show here Saturday was about as rank a proposition as has come to Garden City for a long time. The show itself was bum from the start to finish, and the horsemanship was no better than is seen at the annual cattlemen's carnival every fall.

"Many complaints were made of short change artists, and Sheriff Reeve and his deputies were busy all afternoon and evening recovering money for the victims. He got back considerable, but the larger amount the show got away with."

The roster of the advance car was listed again in the May 27 *Billboard*. Some changes had already been made. C. H. Giourex had replaced Victor Foster as car manager. A new porter was on the car and a chef had been added. Some billposters had been replaced.

By June 19 Kit Carson was in Weiser, Idaho and on the 20th in Pullman, Washington. Wiedemann placed an ad

in the June 24 *Billboard* wanting "wild west people, all lines; calliope player, first class musicians." The route was listed as Elgin, Oregon, June 26 and Pendleton the 27th.

This report appeared in the July 11 *Billboard*: "Manager Wiedemann of the Kit Carson Buffalo Ranch Wild West Show added two more cars recently making seventeen cars with the show and two in advance." This was not entirely correct. Two more flat cars were added as the total was fourteen when the show closed.

The show made a quick turn back east. Wiedemann wrote William P. Hall on July 18 from Ipswich, South Dakota. Things were not going well. He said: "Business was rotten due to poor crops." However, he added that the show had not had a losing week yet in the season. Wiedemann sent his third \$500 payment on the horses and \$45 rent on the elephants. He asked Hall what to do about the elephant Babe.

The July 15 *Billboard* published a photo of "a group of Kit Carson's cow punchers." They were identified as Frank Stewart, Mack Wilkinson, Joe Donaldson, Herb Hunt, Ben Ford, Stub Farlow, Billie Morris, Cora Fielding and Cahrlie Fare.

From Valley City, North Dakota, Wiedemann again wrote Hall on July 27 asking about Babe and declared "she's worthless." The elephant had not been able to make parade since June because of a bad leg and toe. He enclosed the next month's \$45.

Still another roster of the advance advertising car appeared in the July 29 *Billboard*. Doc Allman was now local contractor. J. M. Richards was car manager, replacing Charles Giourex, who had been demoted to billposting. Louis Rippy had been promoted to boss lithographer. George Moran had been added as a bannerman. There was also a new porter and a new chef.

Kit Carson was in Hawley, Minnesota on July 29. Wiedemann didn't linger in a territory which was indicative of the heat being left along the way by the heavy grift. The show went into Wisconsin on August 7 at Grantsburg.

The Carson personnel included a group of grifters. Col. Weaver, Kid Hunt, Boston, Honest John Brown and Col. Hoke were some of the lucky boys operating in the side show and on the midway of Wiedemann's operation.

The blatant games of chance, plus short changing frequently brought irate towners and sheriffs to the lot and often to the train at night.

Milt Hinkle was a cowboy with the show in 1911. His memories, published in the September-October, 1963 *Bandwagon*, of how the grifters operated included these incidents: "In April of 1911

I worked for a while at the Union Stock Yards in Knasas City as a 'dock rider.' While riding dock early one spring like morning I saw in the railroad yards a big bright orange colored baggage car lettered Kit Carson Buffalo Ranch Wild West Show. In small letters it said Advertising Car No. 1. I rode over and inside the car were three or four billposters folding paper. I asked them where the show was playing and they told me Centraillia, Illinois. Two days later I caught up with the show in Centraillia. The first thing I saw was the show unloading.

"I had heard a lot about this show and how wild it was. Action and excitement was what I craved, and this outfit was said to have plenty of both at all times. I went to the lot and headed for the dressing room. I talked to Henry Boggs, chief of the cowboys and quickly joined out at \$15 a week.

"As the new boy I was given Windmill, a bucking horse, to ride in the show. After the show I was told that I was the first man to ride Windmill under a big top. The boss canvasman came into the dressing tent and told Boggs he had better keep his cowboys around on the lot. 'I'm looking for a Hey Rube tonight.' Boggs asked him way and he said, 'Oh, one of them grifters made a touch from some town monkey for a couple of grand. The monkey wanted his dough back and got kinda tough, so one of the side show boys slugged him. The towners started to cut the kid show down, but the coppers kind got them quieted down now. They left the lot, but they said they was coming back.'

"That was why they were pushing the show so fast. They wanted to get loaded and out of town. The towners caught us on the way to the cars. I wound up getting a good beating. This ended my first day with the Kit Carson show.

"The next morning found us in Mexico, Missouri. Like all grift shows, Kit Carson always showed outside the city limits on account of high license fees in town, and to keep from having to 'fix' two sets of officials in order that the short change grifters could work.

"Sometimes I would watch the crap games and card games and listen to the grifters tell how they had clipped the 'town monkeys' that day, meaning how they had short-changed the people out of their money.

"This was the everyday routine on the Kit Carson show, and I was getting tired of the monotony and decided that I

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Part of a newspaper advertisement
used by Kit Carson in 1911.

would head back to the Kansas City Stock Yards, but after the show the mailman came around with the new route cards which showed that we would be in Kentucky for one week and then in West Virginia, I changed my mind.

"The day after I purchased the route card, we were in Henderson, Kentucky and it was here that some more excitement started in the connection. But this time both Hank and I were amused instead of getting all messed up.

"We were at our post, when I looked up and saw a little man with a funny walk and with his hands behind his back, coming through the connection. The man had all the earmarks of a Jew, one who had not been long in the United States.

"Lum and Chester [Monahan], another connection man, made a grand rush for the little Jew and Chester beat Lum to him.

"Chester stopped the man by saying, 'Mister, I'm selling reserved seats to the big show and have just a few more left. Unless you buy a reserved seat, you will have to stand up.' The man started off saying he would stand, but Chester stopped him once more saying, 'I need some paper money. Have too much silver.' He then opened the leather bag



that was hung from his shoulder and proceeded to rattle some silver, complaining that the bag was getting too heavy to carry. 'Relieve me of ten or twenty dollars worth of silver for paper money,' begged Chester, 'and I will give you the best seat in the house.'

"The little man looked at Chester and said, 'Sure, I will do dot.' He put his hand to his left hip pocket unbuttoned the flap and pulled out a roll of green backs that would have choked a horse. He took out a tenspot, put it in his own vest pocket, rolled his money up and put it back in his hip pocket and very carefully buttoned the flap. He then took the ten-dollar bill from his vest pocket and said to Chester, 'Give to me the money and the ticket.'

"Chester then laid the ten silver dollars in his hand and stuck the ticket in the man's outside coat pocket. Chester then told the man that he would have to hurry if he wanted to see all the show.

"Then Henry, the boss cowboy came riding through the connection at a gallop and Lum grabbed the little Jew, pulling him out of the way and telling him that he would have to keep his eyes open or he would get run over. Patting the Jew on the arm, Lum said, 'Now hurry along,' and pointed toward the show that was just starting. As Lum pointed, the little Jew looked up and Lum took the ticket from his pocket. As the man hurried away, I noticed that his hip pocket had been cut away and that he was minus his roll of money.

"Well, I guess that this fellow was like me. Every time I have a roll of money in my pocket, I feel for it about every five minutes to see if it is still there. That is just what this gentleman did. He felt for his money and both money and pocket were gone.

"Here he came back, running and wringing his hands and hollering, 'I've been robbed.'

"He was acting just like a crazy man and I sure did feel sorry for him. In the meantime Lum had disappeared under the sidewall, but Chester was still there

Five sleepers on the Kit Carson Buffalo Ranch train. Howard Tibbles collection.

and the little man ran up to him and demanded his money back.

"The show's legal adjuster came over and asked what the trouble was. The little Jew, still wringing his hands and trying to talk with them all at the same time, was so excited that he could not be understood. Chester told the legal adjuster that the man was crazy.

"Then the female impersonator who worked the 'Come-in' at the show, came out of the big top and started through the connection. He had just finished working the 'come-in.' I am sure that when you have been to the circus, that you have seen the female impersonator, a man dressed up as a woman, who always walks up, grabs some man by the arm and escorts him to his seat, or even goes so far as to run up to some man and kiss him, much to the amusement of the crowd. All of this taking place before the big show starts.

"Chester stopped the impersonator and said, 'You had better take care of your husband, lady. He is having some kind of a crazy spell.'

"Peggy, as we called the impersonator, immediately took hold of the man and Chester continued, 'Just touched. A-stayity-way. All-stay.'

"The reply was 'Es-yay.' These words had meant, 'Just got his money, stay with him and stall him.' The answer had meant, 'all right.'

"Peggy, tugging at the little Jew, said,

The Kit Carson big show band ready to parade.



'Come on, you will be all right in a minute, dear--just another one of those old spells.' He then started dragging the poor man toward the seats in the big top, right while the show was going on.

"While they got into the main tent and in front of the seats Peggy looked up at the crowd and said, in a feminine voice, 'Don't pay any attention to him. He is my husband and is subject to these crazy spells.'

"The man kept trying to pull away from Peggy and was hollering, 'You are not mine wife! Let me go! I lost mine money!'

"The audience nearly tore the house down laughing; they thought that this was part of the show. However, the man finally broke away from Peggy and ran back to the connection where the legal adjuster caught hold of him and promised him that he would help him get his money back after the show was over. He took the man to the dressing tent and told him to stay there, and that when the man who he thought got his money came in, for him to tell the clown policeman. (Just more future fun.)

"The show had ten to twelve Russian Cossacks working, doing Russian riding in the show, and when the man started rattling off in Russian, telling the Cossacks all that had happened, they sided in with him. After a lot of Russian conversation, the man left the lot and we did not see him anymore that night. However, upon our arrival in the next town, the first person I saw was the man and he was with the Cossacks.

"We were ready to leave the lot for parade when I saw the Jew and the Cos-

sacks once more and this time they were talking with the legal adjuster. I rode up just in time to hear the leader of the Cossacks say, 'We refuse to work unless you give him back his money. Eight hundred dollars. And we will tell the cops all about what is going on.'

"The legal adjuster took a piece of paper from his pocket and had the man sign his name to it. He then

handed him five one hundred dollar bills, and the man was satisfied. He admitted later that he had lost only four hundred dollars and said the experience was worth it.

When the Carson show played Black River Falls, Wisconsin on August 12, the *Weekly Journal* there published this after blast on August 16: "The Kit Carson circus and wild west show was here Saturday. It was a sort of an old fashioned kind of circus and wild west show combined and had many attractive features, such as an old pioneer, wagon, an elephant old enough to be a great-grandfather and a 'shell-game' as old as a hickory tree. Some of the show was said to be good. Some was reported not so good. Opinions vary as to which was the good and which not so good. There were some Indians, properly painted. Some dark-skinned gentlemen rode horses as though they knew how. There were some cowboys also and there was a stage coach, which was robbed in due and proper fashion, just as all stage coaches are in yellow literature and circuses. If reports can be relied upon one of the most interesting performances of the whole show was that of an adapt transformer who used three shells and a rubber pea in his exhibition. It is alleged there was an extra charge for seeing this part of the circus, which was very reluctantly paid by those who wanted to know more about it. This show may or may not be related to the old scout, Kit Carson, but whether it is or not, his name would go down in history with more luster if it had been kept out of the circus business. Incidentally, no good town need feel slighted if this circus fails to stop. If it comes here again it may get a crowd, but we hardly think it will be the same crowd that saw it Saturday. (P.S.—Medicine men and gold-watch peddlers, keep away for a time. There is nothing doing.)"

The August 25th Dodgeville, Wisconsin *Sun Republic* treated the show better with this small editorial: "Kit Carson's Wild West show played here Friday the 21st. The main show was fairly good and some of the feats of riding, especially those of the Cosack Prince were skilled and greatly enjoyed by two fair sized audiences."

These Wisconsin after notices indicated that the show was doing good business, but not giving much of a performance. The most notable references were to the short change artists with the organization.

Wiedemann advertised again for help in the August 22 *Billboard*. This time he

said, "Wanted immediately for long season south, wild west, circus people, clowns and any acts suitable for open arena, an experienced bookkeeper and musicians." Stands listed were Chipewa Falls, Wisconsin, August 11; Black River Falls, 12th and Elroy, 14th.

The show played Lewistown, Illinois on August 21. By September 8 it was in McCook, Nebraska.

The September 2 *Billboard* noted that Chief Medicine Cloud and his squaw, Mary, lost their one year old son after short illness in Dodgeville, Wisconsin on August 18. The mother was so upset about the death she attempted suicide by hanging herself by a shawl from the rafter of a sleeper. Her husband arrived in time to save her. Manager J. C. Kelly stated she would not be able to take part in the performance for some time to come.

The Carson show returned to Kansas to play Washington on September 16. The day before the show was to play Frankfort, Kansas on September 18 the *Daily Index* published this warning about the aggregation: "Word came to the *Index* yesterday that a gang of crooks were following the Kit Carson show, which exhibits here tomorrow. The letter inclosing clippings from two Nebraska newspapers, state that in one town while the afternoon performance was going on a number of houses were entered in the town and silverware, jewelry and clothing taken. Another place a confidence game was attempted on a citizen for several hundred dollars, but was prevented by the action of the sheriff."

After the show left town the *Index* noted: "There were many different opinions about the Kit Carson show here yesterday. We would judge that about half the people liked the show and the other half were disappointed. There was a good crowd out in the afternoon and a fair sized crowd at night. There were

Games of chance and dancing girls were offered in the Kit Carson side show.

some good riders and ropers with the show, and as many said they had seen better and lots worse shows of the kind.

"Of course, it was an embarrassing position in which the *Index* was placed, having to issue a warning to people to beware of the show, or the people following it, after they had advertised with us considerable, and we knew just about what they would do when they reached town; that they would immediately demand an explanation. But we had the 'papers' for it, and it was a good thing for the show as well as the people. The people had a right to know the reputation of a show coming into a city, and they read the riot act to the crowd of followers and those connected with the show before they had unloaded here in the morning. And so there was nothing out of the way here that we could see. No doubt, a show has much to contend with, and in that many people there are always to be found good and bad characters.

"The Kit Carson's steam calliope looked like it had done played its last tune."

In another article in the September 20 issue the *Index* noted that the body of an Indian had been found under a railroad bridge in Wymore, Nebraska on September 16. The Kit Carson show had played there the day before. The show had been contacted and they said one of their Indians was missing. "Coroner Reed of Beatrice, after viewing the body, expressed the opinion that the Indian was struck by the side of the bridge and knocked off. The show train left Wymore about 1 o'clock this morning, and it is supposed the Indian was hanging on the side of the car when he was knocked off. The body will be held in Wymore until some defiant information can be received from the proprietor of the show."

On September 21 the *Index* reported that the Indian was Big Bear. His wife, who was also employed by the show, returned to Wymore from Washington, Kansas on the 20th and had the remains taken to the Pine Ridge agency for interment.

By early fall Wiedemann was still attempting to settle the question of Babe the elephant. He by then had received two other elephants from Hall.

Wiedemann wrote Hall on September 23: "Elephants arrived O.K. and I started Babe for home on September 20. I did not pay freight on her as the agent did not know how much it would be so let me know soon as she





The circus blacksmith at work next to the stake and chain wagon.

gets there and I will send a check for the amount of freight. I dead-headed the flat car back. Enclosed is a check for \$45 payment for elephants week ending September 23."

The Buffalo Ranch made a short tour of Kansas and entered Arkansas on September 29 at Greenwood and remained in that state until closing at Clarendon, Arkansas on November 25.

The final *Billboard* report of the season was published in the December 16 issue: "Wiedemann Bros. Kit Carson Buffalo Ranch closed a season of thirty-two weeks at Clarendon, Arkansas on November 25 and shipped direct to winter quarters at Harrisburg, Illinois. The show had a most prosperous season, far exceeding the expectations of the management. The opening witnessed a 12 car show, but before the closing four more cars had to be added to transport the increased features.

"The tour included eighteen states and covered a distance of over 25,000 miles. Only one day was lost, that being due to a serious washout on the D. & R. G. Railroad.

"The season of 1912 will open at Harrisburg during the forepart of April. Wiedemann Bros. will spare neither time nor expense to make the show one of the strongest organizations of its kin-

Leo Collins, general superintendent of the Carson show, posed in his buggy with the bannerline in the background.



don the road next year. Several big features have already been engaged and negotiations are pending for one of the biggest surprises ever carried by a wild west show."

Wiedemann was impatient with Hall. Diamond Billy had not answered his letters and complaints. Wiedemann wrote on December 23, 1911, asking Hall why he had not replied to a letter, stating, "I've sent full payment and sent elephants home, but have received no word, although the checks have been cancelled."

Independent of his tough talk Wiedemann also wrote Hall, "I want a flat, a stock car, ten or 15 lengths of reserves, 20 band uniforms, a steam calliope and eight draft horses."

1912

During the winter of 1911-1912 news appeared in the *Billboard* from time to time about the Kit Carson show. This was uncharacteristic for Wiedemann who preferred to keep a low profile in the industry.

The first reference to the show appeared in the January 13 issue. Dated December 29, Harrisburg, Illinois it read: "Wiedemann's Kit Carson Buffalo Ranch will be a fine eighteen car show next season. A car load of parade stuff has just been received from the East, which is brand new. Tom Tucker is rebuilding the wagons and building some new ones also. The show will have an entire new outfit of canvas. Harry Parish has signed as train master with the show."

The same issue contained a Wiedemann advertisement wanting wild west and circus people in all lines, doing two or more turns; 30 clowns, including a capable producing clown; 20 first class musicians; 50 billposters, car managers, lithographers, programmers; contracting agent; car porters; manager for privilege car; ticket sellers and reliable men in all departments. He added: "I run everything personally this season."

The January 20, 1912 *Billboard* reported: "Harrisburg, Illinois. T. F. Wiedemann, wife and daughter Zella Marie, returned to Harrisburg last week after spending the holidays

with Mrs. Wiedemann's mother at Madison, Indiana. Mr. Wiedemann will leave again in a few days for a purchasing trip. It being his intention to buy four more cars, a number of head of stock, and numerous additions to enlarge the show for next season.

"James V. Beattie was a visitor to the quarters last week. Beattie will again have charge of the side show and the candy stands next season.

"Leo Collins, the general superintendent of the show, was taken suddenly ill with an attack of pneumonia and was immediately removed to Robinson's Hospital, where he is now convalescing.

"Harry Parish, last season train master with the Two Bills' Show, was a visitor for several days. He will have charge of the Kit Carson train next season.

"George Kratz, of the Kratz Calliope Co., of Evansville, Indiana, was another visitor. Kratz came over to consult with Mr. Wiedemann in regard to the new calliope which the show will carry."

The Kratz unit was planned as a replacement for the instrument in the box type wagon.

The February 1 *Baraboo Republic* told of Wiedemann's visit to Baraboo on January 26, 1912. He bought three elephants, Rubber, \$1,200; Lena, \$1,100 and Lou, \$1,500 from the Ringling Bros. He also bought a steam calliope, \$400; an elephant car, \$400 and a flat car, \$400. All of this was former Forepaugh-Sells surplus.

The February 17 *Billboard* reported: "February 9. Wiedemann Bros. Kit Carson Buffalo Ranch Wild West will leave winter quarters this season larger than it has ever been in its entire career. Mr. Wiedemann will be surrounded by a capable staff.

"Every piece of canvas from the wagon covers up will be brand new. A great many new wagons have been purchased and all the old ones have been thoroughly overhauled. The train, which has been increased to almost twice its former size, is acknowledged to be one of the safest and finest ever contracted to be transported by a railroad. Some leading feature circus acts are contracted, and in conjunction with the all-star wild west. It will make the performance more than pleasing from start to finish.

"T. F. Wiedemann has returned from Baraboo, Wisconsin, where he purchased from the Ringling Bros. several cars, a herd of trained elephants, a steam calliope and other show property.

"Harry Parish, train master, is bringing the shipment from Baraboo to winter quarters.

"George Donahue will be the eques-

trian director and will have full charge of the arena.

"James W. Beattie, who will have charge of the side show the coming season, was in consultation with Mr. Wiedemann in Chicago. Beattie will spring several big surprises in the annex."

"W. H. Godfrey will do the adjusting."

Wiedemann advertised again for help in the February 2 *Billboard* wanting, "A few more first class acts, four, six and eight horse drivers, trainmen, cooks, waiters, seatmen, sailmakers, car porters and workmen in all departments."

The March 15 *Billboard* reported: "Everything is about ready for the opening of the Kit Carson Buffalo Ranch Show on April 1. All the bosses have arrived at the quarters, and each department is fitted out in first class shape. Tom Tucker, Jack Rhodes, and Martin Johnson have extended their clever workmanship on the new wagons."

"The cars have been thoroughly overhauled and will be ready to leave the paint shops by the middle of the month. Will F. Colby has been in charge of the lettering, using a yellow on the cars with silver and red trimming and a silver with green shading on a red for the wagons. He has personally placed several beautiful paintings on the tableau wagons. The parade this year will be one of the big features."

"George Donahue will leave about the 15th for Pine Ridge, South Dakota to engage the Indians. Twenty-five bucks, ten squaws and eight children will be carried with the show. The Indians will have a special car all to themselves."

"The first shipment of special paper has arrived and is already loaded into the advance cars. Fourteen billposters are already on the ground and the remaining twenty are coming in daily. Joe C. Donahue, the general agent, has returned from the railroad offices and is ready to take charge of the advance forces, which leave about the middle of the month. Wirt W. Damson, contracting agent, is out on the road now, having commenced his work for the season of 1912."

The March 23 *Billboard* listed the staff: "Thomas F. Wiedemann, proprietor and manager; Al. G. Frazee, treasurer; C. H. Parker, auditor; Joe C. Donahue, general agent and railroad contractor; Wirt W. Damson, local contractor; H. C. Buckner, special agent; Mark Ardmore, contracting press agent; Dave Detrick, press agent back with show; James W. Beattie, side show manager; George W. Donahue, equestrian director; Leo Collins, general superintendent; D. T. Bartlett, superintendent of privileges; Edward R.

Moore, musical director; Chester Monahan, superintendent of reserved seat tickets; Thomas J. Tucker, superintendent of canvas; Harry Parish, train master; Johnny Horgan, boss hostler; Lorea Neil, superintendent commissary department; W. H. Daily, superintendent of lights; Edward Monroe, superintendent of properties; William Morris, superintendent of ring stock; Chester Smith, superintendent of baggage stock; J. B. Rhodes, twenty-four hour agent; William Hays, superintendent of elephants; Jack Burke, boss carpenter; Muley Wilson, superintendent of animals; Martin Johnson, blacksmith; James H. Donahue, manager advertising car No. 1; Charles A. Whalon, manager of advertising car No. 2; Charles W. Morehouse, checker-up; W. H. Godfrey, legal adjuster; Kenilworth LaChoisier, announcer; Hugh McCullough, steward."

Some of the staff of the 1912 Carson show were to become well known later. Joe C. Donahue would become manager of the Hagenbeck-Wallace advance car in 1920 and was later an agent for that show. He finished his career as an advance agent for Ringling-Barnum. Tom Tucker moved to the Mugivan Howes Great London in 1920 and Gollmar Bros. in 1921 and 1922 as lot superintendent. During the winter of 1924-1925 Tucker built eleven cages for Christy Bros. Chester James Monahan moved from grifter to circus owner in 1918 when he and Herbert Duval toured a 2 car edition of Howe's Great London. Monahan later was identified with Jerry Mugivan shows, usually handling the connection sale of reserve seat tickets. In 1924 he leased the Gollmar Bros. title and some show plunder from Mugivan and took out a 5 car combination tunnel and flat car circus which was loaded with grift.

Kit Carson opened the 1912 season in Harrisburg, Illinois on April 1 and immediately headed west. The show traveled on seventeen cars, one advance, five stocks, five sleepers and six flats.

Wiedemann presented a strong performance of circus and wild west acts



The Kit Carson train wreck on April 9, 1912.

consisting of cowboys, cowgirls, Indians, Russian Cossacks, the Miller family tight wire act, Johnnie Manilla, Art LaFleur, the Demar troupe and the Andersons.

The side show was again proliferated with grifters. The sky was the limit. Chester Monahan and Kid Bartlett had the connection, where high pressure reserve seat tickets were sold, with lots of short changing.

The big top was a 120 foot with three 30s. The side show was a 70 with three 30s. The Hall elephants had been returned, replaced by the three from Forepaugh-Sells.

The season got off to a bad start. The May 18, 1912 *Billboard* reported: "Several dates of the Kit Carson Buffalo Ranch show were lost on account of wet lots and a flood at Charleston, Missouri. On the Sunday run out of Poplar Bluff, Missouri, the rails spread, throwing five cars into a ditch and injuring ten workmen. One flat car was broken in two by the wrecking crew. The calliope, water wagon and stage coach were left behind as they were all badly damaged."

The April 9th Carson train wreck's principal loss was the beautiful steam calliope that had been on the Forepaugh-Sells Circus in 1910 and 1911. This wagon had one of the shortest lives in circus history. It appears that the

Another view of the wreck outside of Poplar Bluff, Missouri.



Carson show did not have a calliope in its parade for the rest of the 1912 tour.

The Kit Carson route seldom appeared in the *Billboard*, however a few dates placed the show in Wakeeney, Kansas, May 3; Hoxie, May 4; Superior, Nebraska, May 10 and Hastings, May 11.

During the 1912 season the show went to the west coast for twenty-six days. Kit Carson played Lyle, Washington on July 27 and Forest Grove, Oregon, July 28.

Wiedemann advertised in the July 27 *Billboard* wanting competent bosses in all departments who could keep sober and handle a sixteen car show. He also wanted a capable and sober railroad contractor.

The show played San Luis Obispo, California on September 16. The following day the local *Morning Tribune* commented: "The so-called Kit Carson Buffalo Ranch Wild West Show drew a large crowd yesterday in this city. It was an unusual crowd to be present for a show of its size. The street parade, billed for 10 o'clock did not take place until half-past 12, after the crowds had grown tired of waiting, and the show in the afternoon failed to please in numerous instances. Last evening the reports were no better. It might be said a few years ago Buffalo Bill came to town and showed the people what a real wild west show was and many had attended believing the Kit Carson aggregation was a similar affair, but in this they were sadly disappointed." The show played Lompoc on September 17 and Santa Barbara on the 18th.

The final *Billboard* note of the year appeared in the December 21 issue: "The Kit Carson Buffalo Ranch Shows closed the season at Obion, Tennessee on December 5, and was shipped to winter quarters at Harrisburg, Illinois. The weather was good up to the last day. Many additions will be made to the show for next season. More than half of the people have been engaged for next season, practically all of the advance, Joe C. Donahue will be general advertising manager; E. L. Brannan, traffic manager and Parson Miller, special agent."

1913

Wiedemann went back to William P. Hall during the winter of 1912-1913. He wrote Hall on January 1, 1913 raising cane about some harness, saying, "The harness ar-



HARRISBURG, TUESDAY, APRIL 1ST, 1913

The cover of the program issued at the opening stand of the 1913 season.

rived. I find it is just common farm harness and is absolutely no value to me. You will remember you represented this to be good harness, claiming it was worth \$40 a set." Ten days later he wrote Hall saying he was returning the harness. After losing the former Forepaugh-Sells steam calliope in the 1912 wreck Wiedemann needed a replacement. Another calliope appeared on the show in 1913. The wagon has not been identified on any circus before that year.

The performing personnel of the 1913 Kit Carson Buffalo Ranch Wild West.



The 1913 staff included W. W. Damion, assistant manager; C. H. Parker, treasurer; Joe C. Donahue, general agent; Ed L. Brannan, railroad contractor; William J. Lester, local contractor; Charles W. King, contracting press agent; J. Frank Brady, special press agent; James H. Donahue, press agent with show; William W. Damion, side show manager; W. C. Cox, general superintendent; Edward Moore, musical director; Chester Monahan, reserve seat superintendent; and O. A. Divine, trainmaster.

The 1913 season opened in Harrisburg on April 1. The printed program contained local advertising.

It read: "Wiedemann Bros. Famous Concert Band will give a grand preliminary Music Festival one hour prior to each performance, Prof. Edward R. Moore, Bandmaster."

"Display No. 1. A grand review and introduction of characters."

"Display No. 2. Cosmopolitan races, in which daring riders and sure-footed steeds strain every nerve in an earnest endeavor to reach the wire ahead of their rivals."

First. Indian pony race.

Second. Cowgirl race

Third. Cowboy race.

Fourth. Clown donkey race.

Fifth. Race of nations; Cossacks, cowboy, Indian and Mexican.

"Display No. 3. Clowns in side-splitting burlesque and pantomime."

"Display No. 4. The Pony Express, being a true and historical presentation of the manner in which the United States mail was carried throughout the West in pioneer days."

"Display No. 5. Astonishingly clever and accomplished aerial artists, who execute the most sensational deeds of daring in midair."

"Display No. 6. Comical and mirthful clowns introduce strains of topical music."

"Display No. 7. Fearless western horsemen picking up small objects off the ground while

mounted on thoroughbred horses, running at great rapidity, concluding with trick riding cowboy mounts and dismounts, hanging from the saddle head downward, supports himself on the maddened animal's neck with toes pointed rigidly skyward and does daredevil deeds while the thoroughly aroused thoroughbred is running at thrilling speed.

"Display No. 8. Ex-

traordinary presentation of acrobats and contortionists—the most difficult acts of this character ever attempted and successfully executed.

"Display No. 9. A band of Sioux Indians in their native war dances, showing the modes and customs the redmen went through in the early days preparatory to going on the warpath, led by their chiefs and accompanied by their squaws and papooses.

"Display No. 10. Wiedemann Bros.' herd of performing pachyderms. Mountains of Flesh executing exceedingly clever tricks. Displaying careful training and wonderful intelligence.

"Display No. 11. A joyously jolly convocation of clowns who are guaranteed to put the blues to perpetual rout.

"Display No. 12. Daring artists perform perfect poses pleasing and picturesque, on Roman rings while swinging in midair, suspended by a slender rope. (Now is the time to purchase to purchase concert tickets.)

"Display No. 13. Cowboys in clever manipulations of the lariat, accomplishing seemingly impossible catches of horses running at full speed, ridden by dare-devil lady riders; concluding with trick and fancy rope spinning, performing clever and graceful tricks and evolutions with the lariat.

"Display No. 14. Astonishingly clever and accomplished artists, who execute the most sensational deeds of daring on an almost invisible wire and aerial rigging, acts of finished and fetching grace—the cap sheaf of perfected equilibrium.

"Display No. 15. Cowboys and cowgirls from the western plains do an old-fashioned quadrille on horseback, attempting to excel the grace and bearing of the beaux and belles of the ball rooms in 'ye olden times,' while the Indians execute a May-pole dance.

"Display No. 16. A few more minutes with the clowns in a nonsensical oddity.

"Display No. 17. Amazing feats of aerial supremacy, artists performing tricks as marvelous as to be almost beyond the realms of reason."

Display No. 18 was omitted in program.

"Display No. 19. The Overland Stage Coach on its historical trip to Deadwood is attacked by Indians, the guard is killed, the coach looted, when the timely arrival of cowboys and cowgirls puts the savages to flight.

"Display No. 20. (Be sure to buy concert tickets and see the bucking horses.)

"Display No. 21. Far-

famed jugglers in marvelous manipulations of numerous objects, causing wonderment and admiration.

"Display No. 22. Prince Lucci and his daring troupe of Royal Imperial Russian Cossacks. A desperately dangerous Display of unrivaled fearless horsemanship.

"Display No. 23. Another period of mirth provoking, fun creating antics by the clowns.

"Display No. 24. Grand Sublime Dramatic Spectacle—Battle of Wounded Knee.

"Synopsis of Events. Trapper Tom, a pioneer of early days, returns from his hunt across the mountains to his happy prairie home; he meets the county sheriff and invites him to share his humble fare; they approach the house and are greeted by the trapper's wife and child. As they retire to the cabin for supper, two Indian warriors appear in all their war paint at the upper end of the valley, and ride cautiously toward the lower basin, reconnoitering while en route. They discover the trapper's trail and follow it carefully; it leads them to the prairie home, where they discover Tom's horse tied outside. One of the scouts dismounts and cautiously approaches the cabin to ascertain if it is inhabited. Seeing the family at supper he starts to remount his pony, when he is discovered and shot by Trapper Tom. The other scout lays whip to his horse and rides away to the Indian village, where he gives the alarm, and brings the entire tribe howling down around the trapper's cabin. After a short fusillade, Tom, his wife and child are captured and carried away to the camp of the Indians. The sheriff is left tied to the burning cabin, wounded and bleeding. Just as he has almost given up to despair, a party of cowboys and cowgirls, on their way to the Buffalo Ranch, seeing the smoke of the burning cabin, ride up to ascertain the cause; they discover the sheriff and release him. He informs them what has happened and they decide to leave one

The new steam calliope in Edgerton, Wisconsin in 1913.



of their number on the spot to watch if the Indians return, while the remainder of the party go to acquaint the soldiers, who are camped near, under the command of General Forsythe. Shortly after they leave the guard, being weary, pickets his horse and lays down to get forty winks. He has just fallen asleep when a renegade approaching from the distance spies the cowboy's horse and resolves to steal it. He cautiously creeps towards the coveted steed, while the unsuspecting cowboy tranquilly slumbers, little dreaming that danger lurks nigh. The renegade secures the horse, mounts it quickly, rides away, but not before the sheriff, who had just arrived upon the scene, fires a parting shot at him, the noise of which awakens the cowboy. As the sheriff is acquainting him of his loss, the cowboys and cowgirls return, having in the meantime informed General Forsythe's advance scouts of the Indian outbreak. The sheriff describes the horse thief and starts the posse after him in great haste. They find the trail, give chase and soon overtake the culprit, throw a lasso around his neck, jerk him off his horse and drag him away to meet the fate usually dealt to horse thieves in the far west in the early days. Soon after the cowboys and girls leave the vicinity a prairie schooner arrives on the scene, containing a party of home seekers on their way to the Golden West. They decide to camp for the night, and are just preparing supper when discovered and attacked by the Indians and are only saved by the timely arrival of the soldiers, who put the Indians to complete rout.

"A grand ensemble and finale closes the performance."

After the opening the show went south quickly, playing Metropolis, Illinois on April 2, Murray, Kentucky on the 3rd and Paris, Tennessee on the 4th. After nine stands in Tennessee it turned back into Kentucky for eight stands. By May 1 it was in Fairfield, Illinois. The route continued through Illinois into Missouri and Iowa. Several dates were then played in Missouri and Minnesota. The show suffered a blow down in Appleton, Minnesota on June 19, 1913.

The Carson show entered Wisconsin at New Richmond on June 24. The next day it was in Menomonie. The local paper had these comments: "The Kit Carson Buffalo Ranch Wild show, which was a cross between an old fashioned circus and a wild west show, attracted an unusually large crowd

to Menomonie on Wednesday.

"The show, which was due to arrive at 6 o'clock in the morning, was delayed over four hours when two cars jumped the track at Hersey. When the train of eighteen cars finally arrived shortly before 11 o'clock it was announced the parade would start at 2 o'clock, but it was 3:30 before the parade left the fair grounds and 5 o'clock before the afternoon performance was started.

"A report was circulated on the streets Wednesday morning that the show had played at Rice Lake a day or so before and that the police had a lot of trouble. It was learned, however, this show had not been in Rice Lake and no trouble of any kind was reported here.

"The evening performance began about 8:30 o'clock and was over by 10 o'clock all. The last of the cars were loaded and the train started for Neillsville while the storm was raging the fieriest about 2:30 o'clock Thursday morning."

"All merchants reported a big trade Wednesday."

The Cedarburg, Wisconsin *News* printed this short note after the show played there on July 12: "The Kit Carson Wild West show that performed here Saturday drew crowds of people from here and the surrounding territory. The show was not a one-horse concern of any kind.

"About two hundred people formed the company including Indians, Cossacks and others. The aggregation left early Sunday morning for Elkhorn."

The Elkhorn newspaper commented on July 17: "Various gambling games were permitted on the grounds, and the short change man was an active personage. The \$25,000 herd of performing buffalos consisted of two scrawny specimens, while the hundred or so Indians numbered about a dozen. The menagerie of 'trained wild animals' consisted chiefly of a pair of monkeys, an ape, and an 'educated' pig. These were about on a par with the other widely advertised features. The show carried a hundred head of fine draft and saddle horses, which was the only redeeming feature. The show train arrived here at 11 o'clock Sunday forenoon from Cedarburg, and the unloading was witnessed by many local people, as well as the erection of the various tents in the afternoon. The matinee per-



The Carson blowdown in Appleton, Minnesota on June 19, 1913.

formance Monday was attended by a fair sized house but the storm in the evening fortunately cut the audience to practically nothing. The show went from here to Edgerton."

The last stand in Wisconsin was at Muscoda on July 16. The local paper later said: "Wednesday the Kit Carson Buffalo Ranch show played Muscoda as scheduled, with the exception that there was only one performance, that being in the evening.

"The show was to be here Wednesday morning early and to give a street parade, afternoon and evening shows. The train bearing the aggregation did not make its appearance until about two o'clock in the afternoon, and the time until the evening show was taken up getting unloaded and ready for the performance. It was learned from the clerical force that they had come here from Edgerton, that there had been heavy rains and that they had been stuck in the mud at that place until nine that morning before they were loaded. The appearance of the canvas bears out this statement, as it was all dripping water

The performance in Appleton, Wisconsin was side walled following the blowdown.



and the wagons loaded with it were so heavy from this cause that it took from ten to fourteen teams to move the wagons to the Bremmer pasture, where they were to show.

"Early in the day a great number of people gathered in town to see the parade and to attend the afternoon show, but were disappointed, as the parade did not materialize any more than the first show. Many went home without seeing any of it.

"The evening show started about 8:30, and was a mixture of good horsemanship by the Indians, cowboys and Cossacks and the poorest kind of entertainment otherwise. Under favorable circumstances perhaps the main show is as good as the average of its kind, but it was not that here. The concert after the show was as complete a fake as one could find.

"Deliberate lies were told about the attractions here. The other [side] show is said to be immoral and a poor show. There were grafters in plenty both connected with the show and as hangers on. Some of the ticket takers are accused by local people of working a short change scheme of the boldest sort.

"Taking it all in all, this show for the people of Muscoda and vicinity was of a very low order and not worth the money paid for admission nor the time to come and see it."

The show entered Iowa on July 17 at North McGregor and played six stands in that state and then moved through Missouri, Kansas and to Oklahoma for twenty-seven stands. It went into Arkansas on September 9. From September 22 to October 4 the show was in Tennessee.

The August 6 *Billboard* published this listing of the Carson personnel: "Big show: Mr. Parker, auditor; front door staff: Steamboat Bill and Mac, ticket takers. Performers: Prince Jimmie and eight Cossacks; Chief Ironshell and 25 Sioux Indians; Mrs. Delroy, Mrs. Boggs, Mrs. Warren, Dainty Flo, Alice Coat, Mary Long and Alice Short, cowgirls; Henry Boggs, chief cowpuncher; Hank Linton, Joe Pickett, Joe Webb, Red Shirt Warren, Frank Pints, Harry Little and Joe Pinkey, cowboys; Rube Delroy, chief clown; Big Foot Enos, Mac Blean, Harry Karl and Jim Donahue, clowns; Miller Family, aerial and statuary act; the Delmars, wire act; Dolly Graves and Edna Miller, ladder act; Mrs. Moore,

single wire; the Armstrongs, slide for life.

"Bucking horses are featured in the concert. The grand entry is headed by Kit Carson, Jr. on his horse Mayflower.

"Herb Graves is the annex announcer.

The annex: Herb Graves, second openings; Joe Kelly, Mr. Hoey and Herb Grivy, ticket sellers; Prof. Lacy and his band of Georgia Darkies, in comic songs and dances; Mrs. Rose Hunt and her den of python snakes; Prof. Andrews, magic; Daisy Leroy, mind reader; Carson and Campbell, knife throwers, battle ax and rifle shooting; Mlle. Roby, Princess Fioretta and Little Egypt, Oriental dancers. The side show is under the management of Worth Damon, assistant by George Tarbox."

On October 6 the Carson aggregation entered Georgia where it remained until it closed on November 29 at Rockmart.

Wiedemann did not take the show to Harrisburg, Illinois at the end of the 1913 season, but went to Birmingham, Alabama.

1914

This short note appeared in the January 31, 1914 *Billboard*: "The Kit Carson Shows are in winter quarters at the State Fair Grounds, Birmingham, Alabama.

"Wm. J. Lester, local contractor left last week to visit his folks at Zanesville, Ohio.

"The offices of the show in the Liberal Arts building, decorated by W. L. Andrews, have caused considerable comment. Mr. Andrews also has charge of the painting of the show."

Wiedemann bought a complete new spread of canvas from Baker & Lockwood, making a down payment with installments to follow.

A major staff-change was the replacement of long-term general agent Joe C. Donahue. L. C. Gillett assumed the chore of routing the show. Donahue was demoted to manager of the advance car. William Lester remained as contracting agent.

Wiedemann planned to take the show into the eastern part of the country, perhaps feeling that Gillett was better acquainted with this new territory.

The 1914 season opened on March 23 in Bessemer, Alabama. The rest of the month was spent in Alabama and Georgia.

The April 4 *Billboard* provided an opening day review: "Birmingham, Alabama, March 26. The Kit Carson Buf



Inside of the new Baker-Lockwood big top in 1914.

falo Ranch Wild West Show, which has been wintering in this city, opened their season at Bessemer, Alabama, Monday, and played this city Tuesday and Wednesday. The entire canvas is new. The main top is 110 feet, with four forty-foot middle pieces. The show has 18 cars and seven tents in all, and carries three bands and 101 horses. With new tops and everything painted in bright colors, the outfit presents a most attractive appearance.

"The performance is a very creditable one, and consists of a potpourri of wild west and circus acts that keep the spectator thrilled and interested.

"The program in detail is as follows:

"Display No. 1. Grand entry.

"Display No. 2. Introduction of characters.

"Display No. 3. Races.

"Display No. 4. Pony express.

"Display No. 5. Clowns.

"Display No. 6. Single trapeze, performers are: N. Montaine, G. Parento, N. Clark, G. Flach and H. Williams.

"Display No 7. Attack on stage coach.

"Display No 8. Grecian living statuary—by the Walton Family.

"Display No. 9. Trick and fancy riding, and pick-ups, by cowboys.

"Display No. 10. Revolving ladder. Flach Brothers, ladder drop; George Parento, foot juggling; K. Mata; revolving ladder, Lewis and Neal.

"Display No. 11. Roping and rope spinning.

"Display No. 12. Double trapeze, Armstrong Sisters, Clark and Mack, Robettas and Lawton, Havens Sisters.

"Display No. 13. Clowns.

"Display No 14. High-school horses.

"Display No. 15. Indian war dances.

"Display No. 16. Tight wire, Dalton Trio, the DaComas, Walton Bros.

"Display No. 17. Swinging ladders, Dixie Armstrong, A. Clark, C. Clark.

"Display No. 18. Steeplechase horses.

"Display No. 19. Cowboy quadrille on

horseback, and Indian May Pole Dance.

"Display No. 20. Acrobats. Six Waltons, Robettas and Lawton. Henry and Hinds.

"Display No. 21. Prince Jimma's Royal Russian Cossacks.

"Display No. 22. Slide by Mlle. Althea.

"Display No. 23. A Chase for a Bride.

"Display No. 24. Clowns.

"Display No. 25. Aerial butterfly, Mlle. Althea novelty trapeze; Gonzales

Trio, Roman rings; Armstrong Sisters; Roman rings, Lewis and Neal.

"Display No. 26. Return act, the DaComa Family.

"Display No. 27. Spectacle.

"Twenty-four Indians from the Sioux and Cheyenne reservations are with the show, and are in charge of Chief Ironshell.

"A raw, rainy day the 25th kept down what would otherwise have been a record attendance.

"Messrs. Wiedemann, Bartlett and Parker have made a host of friends in Birmingham, and it is hoped that they will return to Birmingham next winter. They received many congratulations on the excellence of their show, and if meritorious acts and a clean, non-risky performance count for success, they will unquestionably reap a harvest this season."

The April 4 *Billboard* listed the personnel of the advance car: "Following is the roster of the Kit Carson Buffalo Ranch Wild West advertising car No. 2: J. C. Donahue, manager; L. C. Gillett, general agent; William J. Lester, local contractor; William (Glory) Miller, boss billposter; W. Slim, lithographer; Will J. Foster, mall man; W. E. Peck, bannerman; W. Cole, programmer; D. M. Spayd, cook; Fred Cipsel, porter. Brush men: Count DeVaro, Geo. (Fritz) Hanlon, Glen Ingle, W. S. (Happy) Washburn, John O. Reppert, John Mulvibill, W. G. (Dutch) Yeager, C. Dodd, P. C. Carbine, L. C. Smith and Charles J. Clark. Opposition brigade: R. E. Johnson, James Cam, Tom Taylor, J. C. O'Bryan, Olham Mitchell, William Jones, Charles. Smith and Paul Garfinkel. The car, up to March 21, had been out in all kinds of weather-rain, sleet, snow and a little sunshine."

This report of the Carson show was published in the May 23 *Billboard*: "The Kit Carson Shows have been doing fine business, showing to packed houses day and night.

"We were caught in a windstorm May

12 followed by a heavy rain. The menagerie top was blown down. In spite of this a fine crowd attended the show.

"The Flying DaComa family is making quite a hit. The Walton troupe of acrobats is one of the headliners, and is doing some clever work.

"Harry Robettas has for his partner, Sonko Mizuma, a Jap, doing a flying perch.

"Willie Clark is working center ring in a foot juggling act. Armstrong Sisters are doing a clever double trap act, and Minnie Fisher, an iron-jaw butterfly act, which is also clever. Colorado Cotton, chief of the cowboys, is doing a fine roping act, making a live catch at break-neck speed. You've got to hand it to Cotton.

"Fred Henkel, the principal clown, is using some new stuff in the line of clown numbers."

The show was in Greenwood, South Carolina on April 2 and in Johnson City, Tennessee on April 9. Kit Carson entered West Virginia at Bluefield on April 14 and played seventeen stands in the state. By May 11 it went into Pennsylvania at Meyersdale and played thirty-five towns.

All was going well on the show according to this report in the June 6 *Billboard*: "The Kit Carson Show did fine business last week, and everybody is well and happy.

"Steve Roberts is making quite a hit with his trick riding. Harry G. Armstrong has increased his band by the addition of two musicians, Elmer Weaver, who was with the Robinson show, playing traps, and C. L. Spencer playing trombone.

"Frank Miller has charge of the canvas again. And you've got to hand it to Frank when it comes to putting up and taking down.

"Mizuma, flying perch actor, while coming out of the arena the night of May 20, was knocked down by a horse, but was not badly hurt.

"The Kit Carson ball team has only lost two games this season. They received their new suits at Tarentum, Pennsylvania, May 21. Harry Lenair is manager."

On June 17 the company went into New York and stayed there through August 27. The last three stands were in the New York City



Two cowboys with a parade flag in the Carson backyard in 1914.

area, Jamaica, Flushing and Long Island City. The route then took the show through New Jersey, Maryland and Virginia.

Wiedemann's decision to route the show in the eastern part of the country was a mistake. It in no way measured up to the previous year's grosses in the Midwest and farm states. It was not easy to fix officials in the Eastern cities and the grift did not produce the income of past seasons.

The August 1 *Billboard* told of activities on the advance car: "The Kit Carson advance car ball team played a game with the North Creek, New York professionals Sunday, July 19, and was defeated by a score of 4 to 2. After the game the circus team returned to the car for supper, and while partaking of the eats the fire bell rang. The boys immediately formed a bucket brigade to help the townspeople fight the flames, there being no fire department in North Creek. Through the quick work on the

The Miller & Arlington 101 Ranch covered part of this Kit Carson billboard near Plattsburg, New York in July of 1914.



part of the boys with the car, a serious conflagration was prevented."

The October 3 *Billboard* reported: "Bedford City, Virginia September 17. The Kit Carson Buffalo Ranch Wild West arrived here at 7 o'clock this morning in a rainstorm. However, a parade was put on at 11 o'clock.

"As soon as the management of the show reached town they visited the B. P. O. Elks' National Home, and invited all of the veterans out to the show.

"Mr. Wiedemann being absent today, Mr. Bartlett is in charge.

"The management states the show is doing nicely, especially since coming south of the Mason and Dixon line. As to the show itself, it was a good, snappy, artistic performance. The Armstrong Family, with the show for some time, closed yesterday to the regret of all.

"Before leaving this city, the Elks with the show visited the graves of their brothers. The veterans of the home wish to express to the management of the show, via Old Billyboy the appreciation of the favors extended."

Eight stands were made in West Virginia before going into Kentucky at Louisa on October 10.

By the end of October Wiedemann knew the end was near. He was way behind in payments to the tent company and the lithograph house, but still kept an outward air of holding on to his show.

This positive note appeared in the October 24 *Billboard*: "Ashland, Kentucky October 14. The Kit Carson Buffalo Ranch Wild West is still on the road, and will continue to be for quite a while. This will probably be the longest season the show has ever had. Business has

been good in spite of much rain in the last two weeks.

"The Waltons are the headliners and are doing some fine work. Chester Walton is featured. Colonel Cotton is chief of the cowboys. And he sure knows how to put the stuff over.

"Harris, boss hostler, left the show in Pikeville, Kentucky. It is believed he is going in vaudeville with his high-school horse.

"At Louisa, Kentucky on October 10 Clounhas, one of the Russian Cos-

sacks, was shot in the back, the wound resulting in his death the next morning. One Mr. Day, said to be a hotel proprietor, is charged with the crime. The funeral was held the same day and the body was laid to rest in a cemetery at Louisa. Floral offerings were many.

"The show is going South."

On October 23 at Harlan, Kentucky, the show was shot out of town by irate coal miners. The next day in Barboursville, Kentucky the Kit Carson Buffalo Ranch Wild West halted forever. Creditors lowered the boom, placing the show in receivership, and had it shipped to the U. S. Printing and Lithographing Co. in Cincinnati, Ohio. It was quickly advertised for sale.

Wiedemann went to Cincinnati with the show. From there, he wrote to William P. Hall on November 2, enclosing an inventory of the show and saying a Mr. Lowe, U. S. Litho executive of Cincinnati, "informed me they would be willing to take your note for six months if you were really in earnest about letting me have the money. Should I raise the money, I will ship the show to Harrisburg, a better place to get out of in the spring.

"Kindley let me hear from you at once here, care of Havilan Hotel."

Wiedemann sent this inventory to Hall:

Rail Cars:

- No. 2 Advance car 65 ft.
- No. 5 Sleeper 60 ft.
- No. 7 Stock car 50 ft.
- No. 18 Sleeper 65 ft.
- No. 30 Sleeper 63 ft.
- No. 35 Sleeper 66 ft.
- No. 50 Sleeper 60 ft.
- No. 73 Sleeper 73 ft.
- No. 60 Elephant car 50 ft.
- No. 62 Stock car 62 ft.
- No. 33 Baggage car 76 ft.
- No. 8 Flat car 60 ft.
- No. 15 Flat car 60 ft.
- No. 20 Flat car 62 ft.
- No. 24 Flat car 60 ft.
- No. 28 Flat car 62 ft.
- No. 40 Flat car 60 ft.

Wagons:

- No. 2 Cook House
- No. 4 Cook House
- No. 24 Tableau, Ammunition and trunks
- No. 25 Chandelier
- No. 30 Side Show
- No. 35 Stable
- No. 44 Tableau, side show trunks
- No. 45 Planks
- No. 50 Planks



Harry G. Armstrong's thirteen piece big show band on Kit Carson in 1914.

- No. 53 Tableau, Pocahontas spectacle
- No. 54 Jacks
- No. 55 Jack Wagon, also parade wagon
- No. 60 Stringer
- No. 65 Menagerie canvas
- No. 66 Tableau, Pit show and stands
- No. 70 Stake & Chain
- No. 72 Tableau candy stands
- No. 74 Tableau, dressing room trunks
- No. 75 Big top canvas
- No. 100 Pole Wagon
- No. - Water wagon
- No. - Steam Calliope
- No. - Stage Coach
- No. - Prairie Schooner
- No. - Private Buggy
- No. - Ticket Wagon
- Horses:
- 36 Head baggage horses
- 5 Mules
- 1 Menage mare
- 1 High Jumping horse
- 8 Driving horses
- 34 Saddle horses
- 3 Buffalo
- Canvas:
- One 110 ft. R.T. with four 40 ft. M.P.
- One 75 ft. R.T. with two 45 ft. M.P.
- One 60 ft. R.T. with two 30 ft. M.P.
- One dressing top 30 x 60

(Above Canvas used one season is in

A buffalo in the backyard of the Carson show in 1914.



good condition, will easily run another season.)

Cook House:

Complete Dishes, 5 Stoves, Tent, tables, cooking utensils etc.

- 20 Set Harness and collars
- 2 Hansom cabs and harness
- 30 Length 10 tier blue seats
- 16 Length 7 tier reserved seats

Complete set new Milburn lights, only used one month.

Band uniforms for big show and side show bands.

Uniforms for drivers and property men, miscellaneous.

Stakes, rigging, blacksmith forge and tools, sledges, etc."

Hall did not express serious interest and was not about to bail Wiedemann out.

Following the close of the Carson show there was no mention of the elephants. The Woodcock elephant files do not list Lena being on the show in 1914. However, she turns up in 1915 with Rubber and Lou at the Hall farm which suggests that Wiedemann saw the foreclosure of his show coming and made a fast deal with Hall ahead of the creditors. The elephants remained at the Hall farm through 1918. In 1919 the three bulls were on Fred Buchanan's Yankee Robinson circus. Rubber was later on Palmer Bros. in 1921, Howes Great London in 1922, Golden Bros. in 1924 and Lee Bros. in 1916 and 1927. In 1928 she was sold to Russell Bros. and remained on that show through 1938.

The *Billboard* reported on November 28: "Walter L. Wilson, secretary of the Baker & Lockwood Mfg. Co., of Kansas City, Missouri, was appointed ancillary receiver of the Kit Carson Buffalo Ranch Wild West show in the U. S. District Court, Cincinnati, by Judge Hollister November 20, following the institution of bankruptcy proceedings by East St. Louis (Illinois) creditors several days ago.

"It is alleged by the creditors that Thomas Wiedemann, of Harrisburg, Illinois, the proprietor, committed an act of bankruptcy, when, on October 22,

he executed a bill of sale of his property, consisting of a number of cars and horses and other equipment in an effort to give the United States Printing & Lithographing Company, of Norwood, Ohio, preference over other creditors.

"Mr. Wiedemann is said to have been indebted to this company to the amount of \$20,000, and that the bill of sale given covered all of the show property.



A buffalo was paraded in this wagon in 1914.

"The creditors proceeding against the show were the Baker & Lockwood Mfg. Co., amount, \$3,562; William J. Lester, of Zanesville, Ohio, \$700; Walter Rhodes, of Cincinnati, \$600.

"The show was attached recently by Sheriff Cooper in the case of Swift & Co. for \$7,375, and a special jury of five men last week in Magistrate Dempsey's Court, Cincinnati, decided that the lithograph company was the owner of the property.

"In appointing the ancillary receiver the judge ordered all persons in control of any of the assets of the show to turn over same to the receiver, as well as enjoining all creditors, their attorneys sheriffs marshals etc. from transferring or removing, or otherwise interfering with the property of the bankrupt; also from prosecuting, executing or suing out of any court any process, attachment or other writ for the purpose of taking possession of the property or interfering with the ancillary receiver.

"The outfit consists of between 70 and 76 horses, five trick mules, three buffaloes, wagons, etc., which are in winter quarters at Terrace Park and Oakley, Ohio."

Further news of the sale of the Carson equipment and stock was reported in the December 5 *Billboard*: "Walter L. Wilson, secretary of the Baker & Lockwood Co. of Kansas City, Missouri, who was recently appointed receiver for the Kit Carson Buffalo Ranch Wild West Show as the result of involuntary bankruptcy proceedings against Thomas F. Wiedemann, owner of the show, was granted an order by the United States District Court, of Cincinnati Monday of last week, upon application, to sell at public auction some sixty-seven horses, five mules and eight buffaloes, which belonged to Mr. Wiedemann. Mr. Wilson, in his application, stated a sale would be the best thing for the creditors who joined to put Mr. Wiedemann in bankruptcy, for the reason that there is danger of the loss of the animals from disease and, furthermore, that the maintenance of the stock would involve considerable expense, which would eat up the assets of

the bankrupt. The U. S. Printing & Lithographing Co., of Norwood, which claims ownership of the animals, consented to the sale, reserving its rights to what may be realized.

"Mr. Wilson was authorized to have an appraisal made of the animals, and to advertise the date ten days before it is held. The sale will be held Monday, December 7, at 10 a.m. at Terrace Park, near Cincinnati.

The December 19 *Billboard* reported: "Seventy-one horses and ponies, five mules and three buffaloes of the Kit Carson show were sold at auction by Walter L. Wilson at the old John Robinson Ten Big Shows winter quarters at Terrace Park, near Cincinnati, December 10. The sale realized \$4,468.75, the horses bringing \$4,296.25, and the buffaloes \$172.50, the total amounting to \$210.25 less than appraised. From fifteen to twenty showmen and three score or more farmers, dairymen etc., from the surrounding country were present. Jerry Mugivan and Bert Bowers, of Howe's Great London and Robinson's Famous shows, purchased a fine high school horse for \$180, as well as four buckers; A. D. "Tex" McLeod, a fine big buffalo for \$72 and Harry Hill, of Harry Hill's Wild West, a buffalo for \$50 and a high-jumping horse.

"The highest bid on a single horse was \$180 and the lowest \$1.25, a farmer walking away with one for \$1.25, which he said he purchased for the purpose of getting the bride.

"The cars, harness, wagons and parade paraphernalia, which are at Oakley, also near Cincinnati, will be sold at auction early in the spring, it is said."

The remainder of the show was sold at auction on March 20, 1915. Five cars and twelve wagons, not on the 1914 show, that were still stored at the Harrisburg, Illinois winter quarters, were to be sold by description at the auction. A later report said the equipment at Harrisburg was taken over by a rail car company.

The April 3, 1915 *Billboard* reported on the sale. The calliope, less the whistles, which had been stolen, was sold to the C. Guy Dodsen for \$28. Dodsen ordered a new Nichol instrument for the wagon. Although Dodsen offered a

steam calliope for sale in 1916, one remained on the carnival as late as 1922. Historian Dick Conover felt that the Carson calliope was sold to Al F. Wheeler and that it later rotted down in Wheeler's Oxford, Pennsylvania winter quarters. A photo of the Carson calliope in weeds was thought to have been taken in Oxford.

Dodsen also bought the pole wagon, a stage coach, four baggage wagons, a blacksmith wagon, two tableau wagons, a stringer wagon, a bandwagon, a flat car, a stock car, a sleeper and a dining car.

J. Augusts Jones bought a baggage wagon and two sleepers. H. T. Freed, of Rice and Dore, bought a stock car and an elephant car. The ticket wagon and a

Railroad excursion herald used by the Carson show in 1914.

MORE REALISM THAN ANY OTHER EXHIBITION

KIT CARSON'S BUFFALO RANCH WILD WEST

INDIAN MUSEUM, MEXICAN HIPPODROME
And the World's Best Rough Riders

YOUR STATION AGENT KNOWS ABOUT IT—ASK HIM

**START EARLY
Don't
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THE CAROLINA, CLINTFIELD & OHIO RY.
The Carolina, Clintfield & Ohio Railway of S.C.
And The Black Mountain Ry. Co's
WILL SELL CHEAP RAIL TICKETS TO THE

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Children under 12 years HALF FARE.

**CHEAP
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Tickets from the Station and Return named below.

Tickets Good for Return Trip One Day After Sale

A MIGHTY AMUSEMENT ORGANIZATION
Containing Comfortable Seats for 10,000 People

A TRUE REPRESENTATION OF WESTERN LIFE
ITS EQUAL IMPOSSIBLE MARVELS, NEW, SUPERB AND COMPLETE. UNPARALLELED IN RESEMBLANCE TO THE REAL THING. MATCHLESS IN MARVELS, WONDERS, A WONDERFUL SUCCESS IN BOTH EUROPE AND AMERICA. THE BEST AMUSEMENT INSTITUTION ON EARTH. A PURE, MORAL, CHASTE, ENTERTAINMENT. THE MOST PLEASING EXHIBITION OF THEM ALL.

500-PEOPLE AND HORSES-500
THE SENSATION OF THE CENTURY
Come Early and See the Indians and Free Exhibition on Show Grounds

Round Trip Excursion Tickets on Sale			
SPARTANBURG, S.C., Sat., April 4th			
From the following named stations. Good going on train No. 1 and return on April 5th. Last good for return trip on all regular trains.	Rate	From the following named stations. Good going on train No. 1 and return on April 5th. Last good for return trip on all regular trains.	Rate
Clinton	1.00	Clinton	1.00
Greenville	1.00	Greenville	1.00
Rock Hill	1.00	Rock Hill	1.00
Seneca	1.00	Seneca	1.00
Union	1.00	Union	1.00
Walton	1.00	Walton	1.00
York	1.00	York	1.00
MARION, N.C., Monday, April 5th			
From the following named stations. Good going on train No. 1 and return on April 6th. Last good for return trip on all regular trains.	Rate	From the following named stations. Good going on train No. 1 and return on April 6th. Last good for return trip on all regular trains.	Rate
Clinton	1.00	Clinton	1.00
Greenville	1.00	Greenville	1.00
Rock Hill	1.00	Rock Hill	1.00
Seneca	1.00	Seneca	1.00
Union	1.00	Union	1.00
Walton	1.00	Walton	1.00
York	1.00	York	1.00
SPRUCE PINE, N.C., Tues., April 7th			
From the following named stations. Good going on train No. 1 and return on April 8th. Last good for return trip on all regular trains.	Rate	From the following named stations. Good going on train No. 1 and return on April 8th. Last good for return trip on all regular trains.	Rate
Clinton	1.00	Clinton	1.00
Greenville	1.00	Greenville	1.00
Rock Hill	1.00	Rock Hill	1.00
Seneca	1.00	Seneca	1.00
Union	1.00	Union	1.00
Walton	1.00	Walton	1.00
York	1.00	York	1.00
JOHNSON CITY, Tenn., Thurs., April 8th			
From the following named stations. Good going on train No. 1 and return on April 9th. Last good for return trip on all regular trains.	Rate	From the following named stations. Good going on train No. 1 and return on April 9th. Last good for return trip on all regular trains.	Rate
Clinton	1.00	Clinton	1.00
Greenville	1.00	Greenville	1.00
Rock Hill	1.00	Rock Hill	1.00
Seneca	1.00	Seneca	1.00
Union	1.00	Union	1.00
Walton	1.00	Walton	1.00
York	1.00	York	1.00

Don't Miss! Ask Your Station Agent for Details.

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The Excursion Train Will Arrive in Time for all to Witness the
GRAND AND MAGNIFICENT FREE STREET PARADE

TWO GRAND COMPLETE PERFORMANCES DAILY AFTERNOON AND NIGHT
DOORS OPEN AT 7 P.M. PERFORMANCES COMMENCE 7:30 P.M. LATER.

THIS IS THE ONLY BIG SHOW COMING! BELIEVE NO FALSE ADVERTISEMENTS TO THE CONTRARY

tableau wagon were sold to people not in show business.

Billy Rice of the Rice and Dore shows commented about the Carson auction in a *Billboard* letter to the editor in the early 1930s: "J. Augustus Jones, C. Guy Dodson, Harry Freed and myself bought the Carson show when sold at auction on the grounds of the United States Printing Company in Cincinnati in the spring of 1915. The show sold for practically nothing. Here are a few of the prices: elephant car, \$40; stock car, \$35; privilege car, furnished complete, including a safe, \$200; 20 lengths of star-back reserve seats, \$40; big top (khaki), 110 with three 40s, almost new, \$250; 40 foot marquee, \$5; harness, \$1 a set; five sets of carbide lights, \$25. Joseph Ferari bought five beautiful 60 foot flats before the sale for \$1,000."

Tom Wiedemann received nothing from the sale of the show. But he was not down and out. In 1915 he was manager of the seventeen car Barton & Bailey World's Celebrated Shows. John A. Barton and Harry Bailey owned the cir-

cus using equipment leased from the Hall farm. The circus lasted only a few months before being repossessed by Hall.

Wiedemann was general agent for a carnival for seven years. In 1923 he was half owner of the No. 2 W. I. Swain dramatic company.

On May 26, 1928 Wiedemann wrote to Jerry Mugivan stating that he had been managing the No. 2 Swain dramatic show and wanted to take out a show of his own.

He said he had toured a dramatic show for a year and had paid for a baggage car, and should have made \$5,000 if it had been a good season in the cotton country.

He continued, "Now, I need a partner that will furnish \$2,000 to get the show framed and running. I have the complete outfit ready to go. I will furnish the complete outfit and split the profits. How about you furnishing that amount. You can send a man to act as treasurer and represent your interest. I think we can make twelve to fourteen thousand

dollars between June and December.

"If you can't see your way to invest as a partner perhaps you can loan me \$2,000 and I will secure you with a mortgage."

Mugivan jotted a note at the bottom of the letter telling his secretary to acknowledge, advising he was not interested and hoped that Wiedemann would dig up another partner.

In 1931 and 1932 Wiedemann was with the Pacific Whaling Co. He sold flags to schools for another six years. In 1936 he exhibited a giant turtle at a Texas fair.

Thomas F. Wiedemann died on May 10, 1939 in Jackson, Michigan, at age 67. He was buried in his hometown of Harrisburg, Illinois. Wiedemann was survived by his wife Opal, two sons and a sister.

Some material for this article was provided by Orin C. King, Robert MacDougall, Richard J. Reynolds III, Howard Tibbals, Fred Dahlinger and the Circus World Museum.

THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY 1996 CONVENTION

1996 marks the 50th anniversary of the first CHS national convention. In celebration of this landmark achievement, a very special program has been arranged for those coming to Baraboo. Arthur Saxon, an internationally recognized scholar on the history of the circus, will headline the event with an entirely new presentation on the career of James A. Bailey. Other speakers slated for the meeting include recognized historians Dan Draper, Steve Gossard, William L. Slout, Stuart Thayer, University of Wisconsin doctoral candidate Janet Davis, and others of national stature.

Formal registration will commence on Monday, July 15 at 10:00 AM at the Henry Ringling residence. Our gracious hostess, Sally Ringling Clayton-Jones, is opening her residence to CHS members to welcome them to Baraboo and to provide an appropriate location for fellowship and a festive luncheon buffet she will personally prepare. The historical sessions will start with papers in the afternoon followed by attendance at the new CWM circus, "Popcorn and Lemonade." In the evening, members will partake of in a fine catered meal at the Elk's Club, with access to the adjoining Al Ringling Mansion. Immediately thereafter will be the ever-popular CHS auction, a benefit for the CHS treasury and the source of many bargains for convention registrants.

The activities on Wednesday, July 16 will include a panel session on the recent and future developments in the American circus. Important persons from the business, including Hovey Burgess, David Balding and Dominique Jando will participate in this important presentation. CWM's new exhibit "Circus Music" will be showcased in a special afternoon presentation which will include additional interpretation and performers. A viewing of some of CWM's rare posters is planned along with a presentation on artifacts by CWM's Curator, Sherry Huhn. The day will close with the CHS banquet at the Quality Inn with special guest speaker Arthur Saxon.

Historical papers will comprise the morning session on Wednesday, July 17, with the afternoon set aside for opportunities to meet and converse with CWM's circus performers.

The registration fee of \$80.00 covers all of the activities, including the three meals. Those who wish to remain in Baraboo after the convention can witness the return of the Great Circus Train the evening of July 17. Bababoo's annual Concert on the Square Circus Concert will be held Thursday evening at 7:30 PM. Led by famed bandmaster Prof. Gerry Stich. Registrants can also continue their visits to CWM using the season's pass each registrant will receive, or to do research in the Museum's Library. Members should also remember the Great Circus Parade in Milwaukee on July 14 and the Royal Hanneford Circus playing in Milwaukee July 11-13. Make your plans to attend this grand convention and join others in the pursuit and discovery of circus history.

Send the completed registration card in this issue with appropriate payment to the address noted. Registrants should make their lodging reservations at the Quality Inn (608-356-6422) at the special rates effective through June 15 (\$53 single, \$58 double) or at other local motels. Other lodging is available by calling the Baraboo Area Chamber of Commerce at 1-800-Baraboo.

This interview was transcribed by Evelyn Riker.

An Interview with LUKE ANDERSON

By Fred Dahlinger

Today is July 4, 1994. This is Fred Dahlinger speaking with Luke Anderson.

Fred: Luke, can we start off by having you give us your full and complete given name.

Luke: My name is Norman Elliott Anderson and I was nicknamed "Luke" when I was seven or eight years old and I've been called that ever since. I was called "Luke" because I wasn't so hot.

Fred: What's the date of your birth, Luke?

Luke: October 29, 1917.

Fred: And what's the full and complete name of your parents and where were you born?

Luke: I was born in Emporia, Kansas. My father and mother were both born in Emporia, Kansas, too.

Fred: And your father's and mother's names?

Luke: My father's name was Fred Elliott Anderson. My mother's name was Laura May Anderson.

Fred: How did it come to be that your parents were in Emporia, Kansas when you were born?

Luke: Well, my father's father was an engineer on the Santa Fe railroad, and my mother's father was a truck farmer who, incidentally, happened to be the first child that was born in Lyon County, Kansas after it became a county; what year I don't know, but he was number one.

Fred: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Luke: No.

Fred: So you're the only child. What's the ethnic background of your family and does it have pertinence to the circus business?

Luke: None.

Fred: Maybe we can start this with your dad and finding out how he got into the business, and how that led to your coming into the business. Can you give us some background on your dad as far as that?

Luke: My father got into the business by way of horses and rodeos. He made rodeos when he was a young man. He was a bronc rider and calf roper when he was 16-17 years old. He worked on ranches; he worked on a ranch in Pawhuska, Oklahoma for two brothers, name of Dale brothers. It was while my father was working for them that they murdered forty-seven Indians (could be less) which was not known until several years after my father had worked for them. The reason they murdered these Indians was because they were related to the wife of



Norman Elliott "Luke" Anderson at the CHS convention, October 21, 1995. Fred Pfening photo.

one of the Dale brothers, she was an Indian, and they were doing this with the idea of inheriting all the land these Indians owned. That's a little off the track, there, but that was in about . . . well, I was there so it had to be about 1918, because I was a baby still on the bottle.

Fred: So the first show-related experience your dad had was his training as a cowboy, and the different skills of a cowboy.

Luke: About 1919, my father was on the Lucky Bill Show; he was back there about 1921, which I could barely re-

Luke Anderson sitting with dogs on the Lucky Bill show about 1921. All illustrations are from the author's collection unless otherwise credited.



member. They had an elephant by the name of Ginny who had a paralyzed trunk and couldn't pick up grass. I remember picking up grass and putting it in her trunk so she could eat. And they had a buffalo, the nearest I could remember, and that was the extent of the wild animals with the Lucky Bill Show at that time. They had some ponies,

because I had a picture of myself with a pony on the Lucky Bill Show, but I can't locate it right now.

Fred: What did your dad do around the Lucky Bill Show?

Luke: I don't really know. My mother did a wire act and she did ladders and web, though whether she did that in the show I don't know. I don't recollect. They had a cat rack out on the midway that my father and mother would run and that's all I can remember about what they did.

Fred: Okay. So he was on Lucky Bill in 1919 and probably about 1921. Then what's your next memory about what your father and mother may have been doing in show business.

Luke: Well, my father trained a mule to count with his feet. That's the first trained animal that my father had. Then he had some trained dogs, somewhere around that era he got some trained ponies. Also, just before that era, gotta go back to about 1922, he had a wild west show with a fellow that worked for him, name of Herman Nolan, and another guy by the name of Colorado Cotton; and the three of them put on a whole show. Herman Nolan and Cotton both worked for Gene Autry and Roy Rogers. In fact, Nolan was one of their managers, I think Autry's manager. I never did see them again after that, I was just a little kid, but I could remember both those fellows.

Fred: This was quite a bit later that they were working for Gene Autry?

Luke: Yeah. Nolan, I think, was on

the Mix show before . . . I know Cotton was before; but I never did see them again. My dad met these two fellows in the stockyards in Kansas City. They were working for the government, cutting horses out for the Army in World War I, so I guess we'd have to go back to 1917-1918.

Fred: Do you remember what Colorado Cotton's real name was?

Luke: I have no idea; everybody called him that.

Fred: This wild west show that your dad put out, was it a motorized show or a wagon show?

Luke: No, we went town to town on wagons and they had about three bucking horses, or four, and I can even remember the names of some of those horses. One was named Danger, one of them was Billy Sunday, and one was named You'd Be Surprised. Billy Sunday and You'd Be Surprised were brown and white horses and were later trained to be manege horses. They used to actually buck these horses in the show and then bring them back in to do manege.

Fred: Kind of doubling in brass, you might say.

Luke: Yes.

Fred: One thing I'd be interested to know, where did your father get his talent for training animals, or was it something that came out of the horse business?

Luke: It come out of nowhere. He was never around any shows for any trainers to teach him how to do any of that stuff, outside of going and looking at a show, or something like that. He more or less did that all on his own.

Fred: On the wild west show, did they have a sidewall operation or a canopy. What was the physical set up of the show?

Luke: A sidewall operation; no lights, showed in the daytime only. The first time they ever showed at night they showed with carbide lights with cars in a circle and put the show on in the middle of it; that was the first time they ever showed at night.

Fred: Was there any seating on the

show, or did people just come and stand around?

Luke: Yes, they had some seats. Probably four or five high planks.

Fred: Any idea where this show toured or for how long?

Luke: Well, it toured several times. It was around Kansas and Oklahoma, and one time it was called Oklahoma Bud's Wild West, one time it was called Indian Bud's Wild West, and then finally when it got a little more circusy, it was Anderson Brothers. You can see the picture of the calliope truck, it was a 1925 or 1926 Model T calliope truck. By the way, there is one of those for sale in Los Angeles now; I often wonder if it might be the same one.

Fred: Can you describe your mother and dad a little physically--what their stature was, some of their mannerisms things like that?

Luke: Well, my dad was about 5' 10-1/2," weighed about 155-160 pounds; looked like what a cowboy ought to look like. My mother, she was probably about 5' 3" or 5' 4", a small lady; she did wire, ladders and web, worked ponies in the show.

Fred: Did she come from a show family?

Luke: No, run the cookhouse, drove the team from town to town, and took care of business of the circus.

Fred: Was her family in show business, or did she come in through marriage to your father?

Luke: No, her dad was a truck farmer.

Fred: So with this wild west show, it was a good operation for your dad; presumably he'd roll it back out when the time was right and generate some cash to do other ventures?

Luke: Yeah, let's say he wouldn't make any money, so he'd close it and go get a job somewhere until he got enough to take it back out again. He was a butcher in a butcher shop, he drove a taxi, oh, and he worked six months on a railroad. His father got him a job firing

Luke Anderson at the Eli Bridge Co. factory in Jacksonville, Illinois taking delivery of a new elephant semi in 1934.

on the Santa Fe Railroad. That's about what I know about other things that he done.

Fred: Would he always come back to Emporia, Kansas or other towns or cities?

Luke: That was our primary home. When I was a little kid, we wintered once in a town named Coweta, Oklahoma, down south and west a little of Muskogee; and we wintered in a livery barn. There was a living quarters upstairs, where we lived, and just a block down the street was a big mercantile store and my mother become very close friends with the lady whose husband owned the mercantile store. Many, many moons later, I showed there with the Carson & Barnes show and I remembered where this place was, although I was only four or five years old, I hadn't been to school yet, and I remembered where this mercantile store was and also this woman's husband was still there--he had a fit when I told him who I was. Apparently he was a pretty good friend of my dad's. Many years had passed, this old man was 85-90 years old and, of course, I'm talking about when I was there probably about 1956, when I was with the Carson & Barnes show.

Fred: It sounds like they made some good friendships when they were off the road during the winter.

Luke: My father was a likeable man. He was a Mason, a Shriner, and all that good stuff.

Fred: Did being in fraternal organizations help him in booking dates and things like that?

Luke: He never booked his own show, so I would say "No." At that time he never showed under auspices, or anything like that.

Fred: In Kansas City there was the Heart Of America Showman's Club, which was active in the 1920s. Was your dad active in any way socially with the people in Kansas?

Luke: He belonged to it.

Fred: Would he go to Christmas dinners at the Coates House, or things like that?

Luke: He'd go to the Coates House, I went with him and my wife when we were first married, we were married in 1939. In fact, we went up there before we was married, it was a ball they had on New Years night. They had a nice ballroom at the hotel.

Fred: What was the situation like in Kansas City, Missouri. Was it an adequately sized center for showmen that you could get just about any supplies that you would want there?

Luke: We didn't buy much stuff from Kansas City, other than the tents from Baker-Lockwood, who were the



number one tent company. Later on, a fellow who worked for Baker-Lockwood, whose name was Slim Somerville, opened a tent and awning company there and I bought tents from him.

Fred: All right, we've got your dad taking out the Wild West show periodically and we're up to about 1922. Let's pick up his story there. What else does he become involved in?

Luke: Somewhere in that era between 1922 and 1925, he actually had a small circus with a tent, when I say small, I mean small, it was probably 25 people on the show, or something like that, no elephants. It moved from town to town with wagons and he did get a Model T calliope truck, but everything else was wagons. My job at that time, with a fellow over there, Joe B. Webb's son, who was the same age I was, we rode the last wagon with stuff we herded from town to town—ponies, extra horses were herded, while he'd keep them out of the fields on one side of the road, I'd keep them out on the other side of the road. We could get cheese and crackers from those little stores, a nickel's worth would fill both of us up, seemed like a decent price for that era. The price for the show at that time was 25-50 cents.

Fred: The Joe B. Webb you mentioned, he's the fellow that later owned a circus under his own name?

Luke: Right.

Fred: What was his son's name?

Luke: William. William was—I assume it was the same William—killed by an elephant in a zoo down in Florida, probably about 10-12 years ago. I never did see him again after he was on my father's show. But there was an item in *Billboard*—maybe not *Billboard*, but somewhere there was an item about this guy getting killed, William Webb, and I just assumed it was him.

Fred: What did this circus of your father's look like? What was the equipment, what were some of the acts?

Luke: Well, I can remember a couple of things. We had a clown who played guitar and only knew one piece *Turkey in the Straw*. He used to plant me up in the seats, he'd come out and ask for requests, and I was supposed to outloud everybody and holler, *Turkey In The Straw*. That's all he used to do. The guy played *Turkey In The Straw* and away he went.

Fred: Was he in whiteface?

Luke: Whiteface. And Joe Webb, going back to him, he did the concert and he and his wife did a bit that was used around medicine shows, it was called "Charlie Over The River." That was the concert.

Fred: Did they charge extra for the concert?

Luke: Oh, yeah.

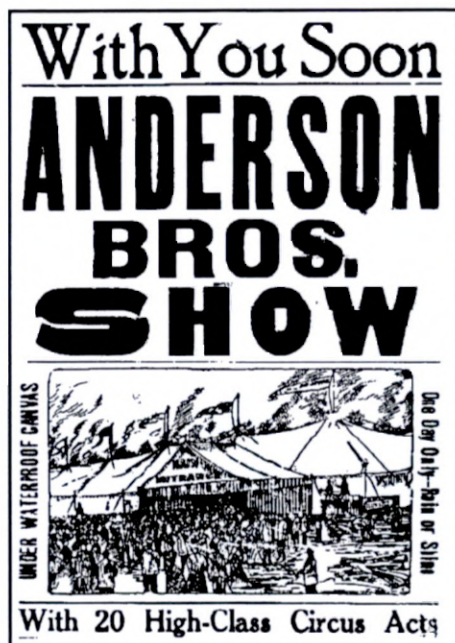
Fred: How much?

Luke: Probably a dime, I would say that's what it was.

Fred: How long did the concert last and how long did the show last, in terms of the time?

Luke: I really couldn't tell you; but my dad, at that time, had a riding monkey, a dog, and a pony drill and he had a pickout pony, and had a couple high school horses, Billy Sunday and You'd Be Surprised. My mother did ladders, the wire; and probably two or three other performers were the whole show.

Fred: It was mostly a ground based performance? Or was there any aerial act?



Part of a herald used by Bud Anderson's show in 1929. Pfening Archives.

Luke: Mostly on the ground.

Fred: It was a one ring?

Luke: I can only remember one ring.

Fred: It was a tent operation? (Yeah.) Single pole or two center poles?

Luke: Well, it would have had at least two center poles.

Fred: So you didn't have a pole in the center of the ring? (No.) Was it an earthen ring curb, or did you carry ring curb on the show?

Luke: No, back in those days he never had a ring curb, he had a piece of canvas with slots in it that the stakes went in and made a circle out of it. I don't know exactly what you would call that. My dad used that for many years. The only place, even when we had a big show, the only place he used the ring curb was the center ring for the liberty horses to walk

on. But the end ring, where the liberty horses didn't work on his size show, they used those canvas things; in fact, I did, too. They were so light and easy to put away, and ring curb is heavy.

Fred: Do you remember anything about concessions on the show, did they sell anything to eat or drink?

Luke: There were no concessions back in those first years, there was no such thing as concessions. I remember we used to walk down after the show to get something to eat—or my father and mother did. In a couple of instances I can remember there was an egg fight one night. I was showing right on the main street, and they were throwing these eggs at us and my dad slipped over behind in a grocery store and bought a whole case of eggs and brought them over and set them in this little marquee so everybody could get all the eggs they wanted. Some guy that had nothing to do with any of this, standing there laughing about the whole thing, see, and my mother took an egg, put it in her hand and walked up by him and rubbed it all over his face. I never will forget that. Today they'd use guns.

Fred: Well, that was the point I was going to raise. What was the relationship like between the show and the show people and the town people? Did you have any hey rubes, or things like that?

Luke: That was about the wildest thing that ever happened, that egg fight.

Fred: Did you ever get into a situation, and maybe this is a bit too detailed, where you'd hire local horses, or anything like that, to move the show, if you had lame horses or anything?

Luke: My dad was also a horse trader, and he always had extra horses; and he used to try to trade horses with somebody every day. One cute little story I can tell about him, he had this horse that was a very good work horse, but the horse was blind, a big black horse. He worked in a four horse hitch, he worked him in the second set, he wasn't a lead horse. So a guy is trying to buy this horse from him one day, or my dad was trying to sell it, I don't know how old I was, seven, eight, ten years old, whatever; and he was picking the feet up and showing the guy the horse, what good shape they were, opening his mouth and showing him he was only five years old, and I kept pulling on the old man's pants leg saying, "Dad, Dad." He said, "Shut up, kid." I finally got it in, I said, "Dad, you forgot to tell the man the horse was blind." He told this guy everything about the horse that was good,

but he didn't tell him he was blind.

Fred: Did that queer the deal?

Luke: That took care of it.

Fred: I would imagine so. So we're up to about 1925.

Luke: Somewhere in this era, I guess about 1927, my father didn't go out and he went over with Claude Webb on Russell Brothers. He was there twice. He was back there again in about 1929, I'm not sure about that year. I think it was the year that Claude acquired his first elephant . . . oh boy, I ought to remember . . . Rubber was the elephant's name, come from the Hall farm. I was getting big enough that I used to stand and hold him. My dad worked the elephant, I remember that. I stood at the back door and held the elephant while he was working a pony or something, and then he came out and got the elephant. One night it was raining and the elephant got a touch of one of the electric lines and I lost the elephant. My dad and Claude Webb were always very close friends about the time . . . do you have a lot of stuff on Russell Bros?

Fred: I think a fair amount. When you say you lost. . .

Luke: He died a multimillionaire, you know.

Fred: Yes. When you say you lost the elephant when it touched the electric wire, you mean it killed it?

Luke: I mean it took off.

Fred: Oh, okay; it ran. Did they walk the elephant overland or was there a truck or trailer?

Luke: They moved them on trucks at that time, 1927, 1928 or it could have been 1929, somewhere in that area because I know the original Seal Brothers Circus was started in the fall of the year in 1930. I was in school, August or September, and it really started as more of a vaudeville show, and my father and a fellow by the name of Arch Marifield, and his wife, were partners in this. They opened in Benedict, Kansas, and they wintered in Grand Prairie, Texas, between Dallas and Fort Worth, halfway between, about where the airport is now. Claude Webb wintered the Russell Brothers circus right across the street from them. I was in school, so I wasn't there, but apparently they made a little money because Dad came out in the spring of the year in 1931 with a full-fledged small circus.

Fred: What year was that, do you remember?

Luke: That was in 1931.

Fred: Let me back up for just a minute, Luke, the show that your dad had out from 1922 to 1925, what did he call that circus?

Luke: Anderson Bros. Seal Bros.

didn't come along until 1930 and it was actually, like I said, more of a variety show. This fellow that was my father's partner was a steel guitar player and his wife played a guitar, and their boy Trevie played the saxophone and he was sensational. They had this little show in about a 40 x 70 tent, probably held 250 people, or something like that, and him and his wife, my father and mother and one guy--that was the whole show.

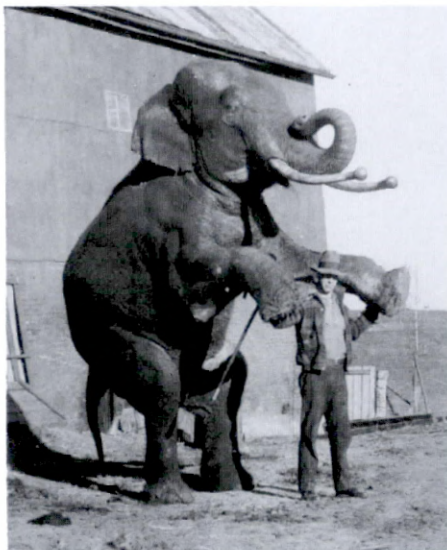
Fred: Where did the name "Seal" come from?

Luke: That was just a . . . in fact, I kinda take credit for that. We were sitting around the house one night and was talking about what they were gonna name this show. Dad was going through all the brothers, Lemon Bros., Orange Bros., and Christy Bros. He was listing all the names and out of a clear sky I said, "How about Seal Bros?" I was only ten or twelve years old, and that's what they finally decided on. I didn't have anything to do with the decision, actually, but they decided on the name of "Seal Brothers." It was a good title, 'cause it looked awful good on paper--four letters "Seal" and four letters "Bros." You could really spread it out on the side of a truck.

Fred: One of the people you mentioned here, Luke, was William P. Hall, who's a well known horse trader, elephant man and circus broker. Any recollection about what people said about William Hall at that time?

Luke: My father bought his first elephants from Mr. Hall. I can remember going out with my father. I made a lifetime friend. The first time I was up there in the early 1930s, I'd have been about fifteen years old, and so I was turned over to a fellow name of Colo-

Col. William Woodcock, Sr. and Major at the Hall Farm in the 1930s. Pfening Archives.



nel William Woodcock to keep me from interfering while buying the elephant. That was the first time I had ever seen Bill Woodcock. He took the whole day, took me all through those barns, told me all about every elephant in their gang, Ding, Boo, Tommy, Major, Alice, Mabel, all those elephants. I could name a stack of them. And Tex, one that Honest Bill later bought. He told me about, I can't tell which elephant it was, Ding, Boo or Tommy, but one of those that if he got you between him and the wall, you was a goner; and one of them would stomp you, and he told me all that stuff. I'm just a kid and I'm really eating all this stuff up. I made a lifetime friend of that fellow. Every year for the rest of his life, he'd write me three or four times a year. He'd send me a letterhead from Downie Bros., he was with Downie Bros. I can't think of all the shows he was with--Eastern shows, Cole Bros.

And kind of an inside story, many years later I told somebody one time that Bill Woodcock never could work for me. Naturally it got right back to him. I'm in Hugo one day, and Bill says "is it true that you told somebody that I could never work for you?" Now, I'm in a corner. I didn't intend for this to ever get back to him, and he was well known for having almost a fit and when he did he was pretty rough on the elephants. So, anyway, I stopped right quick, and I said, "Yeah, I said that, Bill." "Well," he said, "as good as friends as we've been ever since you was a little kid, I hate to hear you'd said that." I said, "The reason I said that is because we are good friends and if you went to work for me, I might be forced to run you off when you had one of those fits, and that would ruin a lifetime friendship." He got a big smile on his face and that squared the whole thing up. The man knew lots about elephants.

Fred: Let's talk a little bit more about Colonel William H. Woodcock. What was Bill like when he was around the Hall farm when you were there for a day or two?

Luke: Well, he was there when all those famous elephant men were there: Spencer Huntley, High Pockets--all those guys were there and, of course I'm a very young fellow. Well, he took the whole day. Another thing I can remember--let me stick this in about Mr. Hall. Mr. Hall took me and my father up to his home and in the process he opened up his safe and showed my father his diamonds. The end of this story is, about two years ago I was going through Lancaster, Missouri and I saw a Hall Museum there, two elderly ladies. I went in. I

was gonna be there fifteen minutes. I spent several hours; and as I left I said to one of the ladies, "Where is the safe at?"

She said, "What safe?" I said, "The safe that Mr. Hall kept his diamonds in." She said, "We don't know anything about any safe at this house." And I said, "Well, there's one in here," and I told them the story. I expect they're still looking for that safe, if they haven't found it. Of course, I'm sure that young Mr. Hall got those diamonds out of that safe, then either plastered over this safe or had it taken it out, because I spent a little time-I even knew what room it was in because I can remember this bit, that was a big thing, these diamonds that Mr. Hall had. Bill was more or less one of the hands around there and, finally, I'm sure it's probably in your stuff somewhere, he made a deal with Mr. Hall for Major. Anyway, he got this elephant and he walked the elephant way up into Iowa somewhere to the Orton Show. The elephant wouldn't go across the bridge, and he had to go down and swim the river with him. That's the first elephant that Bill Woodcock ever owned, and it wasn't a good elephant, it was a little rough.

Fred: It was a big male Asiatic, wasn't it?

Luke: Yeah, he was a tremendous big elephant. At that time Bill wasn't married, but he had been seeing this Orton girl that he later married, and the story goes that he showed up with Major and went over and said hello to her, then just turned around and walked off; so that was the type of love affair.

Fred: The man named Arch Marifield who was the early partner with your father in Seal Bros?

Luke: Marifield. Well, Mr. Marifield, his contributions to the partnership was one automobile, that's all he had. He had a touring Oldsmobile, that was it. He took it on himself one day to paraffin something, I don't know exactly whether it was the living tent, or something, and he did it in the back room of my father's house in Benedict, Kansas. And he set this bucket of gasoline, so help me God, on top of a stove and it blew up and put this guy in the hospital over in Altoona, Kansas. It was the most terrible looking thing I've ever seen in my life. He was in there for over a year and a local doctor there, Dr. Riley, grafted skin on this guy and he finally got him out of there. How they paid for this, Dr. Riley used to drive over there twice a week, it was eleven miles, I think, over there, back and

forth, twice a week, to see him, and he waived the charges; didn't charge him anything, did this for over a year. The druggist, who was a friend of my father's, my father paid him for the drugs. How the hospital bill got paid, I will never know. But, he comes back to town there and nobody ever thought he'd ever play guitar again--a wonderful guitar player--and I don't know whether the town got the money together or my father, I don't know how, but he had a sister that lived up in Oregon, we're talking about 1929 now, and my father never heard from him again.

In 1936, we were showing up in Oregon, and he shows up on the lot. He's got a little band and playing on a radio station. He was around the show all day, him and his wife and Trevie, that was their son. Trevie was about my age and so he was telling my father about, you know, my father was asking him what his plans was, and he said he wanted to open a music store down in Redding or Red Bluff, I've often wondered which town it was. And my dad asked him what it would cost and he said about \$2,500; and that night my dad gave him \$2,500. I never did see him after that. And that was in Coos Bay, Oregon; at that time it was called Marshville, they changed the name. That's all I know about Arch Marifield.

Fred: That brought us up to about 1930. I think there's some major events and major shows in your dad's career at that time. Why don't we just maybe summarize those?

Luke: 1931 was the first year my father ever made any money. Now whether he invented it, or whether it was invented on Russell Bros., I don't know for sure, but that was when they come out with the merchant ticket. My dad put out a ten cent circus; ten cents to get in and ten cents for reserved seats. We actually... you've probably got it in your route somewhere, did three and four shows a day, day after a day. I re-

Bud Anderson and his first elephant Eva. Pfening Archives.



member giving four shows in Mankato, Minnesota, Fairbault and other towns in Minnesota. And that was the first time he had ever made any money.

Then in about 1932--I don't know whether he got his first elephant in 1931 or 1932 from Mr. Hall. Her name was Eva, I think. Hauled her on a flat bed truck, no sides; it was a 1931 truck so it must have been in 1932 that he got that elephant. And in 1932 they went to a ten and twenty cent ticket, they raised the price. Always before that it had been twenty-five and fifty cent tickets. His agent was Lucky Bill's--I'm not sure whether it was his sister or his daughter who was my dad's agent. R. M. Harvey was doing the same thing on Russell Bros. That's the reason I don't know who invented this thing. I don't know, but they were both doing this thing about the same time. Whether one got it from the other or whether Lucky Bill's people came up with this idea, or whether my dad did, I don't know. It would be nice to know who invented this ten cent circus thing.

Fred: Was the ten cents in response to the depression then?

Luke: There was no money and they just flocked to see this thing for ten cents. And my dad had actually never made any serious money until that year, and 1931, 1932, 1933 and 1934 were all good years. Sometime, two years I think, they used a tie up with a newspaper so the newspaper got a percentage of the show for the ten and twenty cent ticket and the newspaper agreed to put in a double page thing for the merchants with their names. In fact, I used that a couple of times and why we didn't continue it, I couldn't get my agent to do it, but it was... we showed Cape Girardeau, Missouri in 1952 and John Foss was my agent, who also did that with my father, and I said, "John, let's go back to that old thing that my dad used." And he set two towns in Missouri and he did a terrific business with it, and I couldn't get that guy to do it any more.

It was a thing that took time to do, you know. William Allen White, who was a very famous newspaper editor, Mr. Foss went into him and laid this thing all out, and he was a friend of my father's, he laid this thing all out and he never wanted to do it in his newspaper and Mr. White told Mr. Foss, "You go back and tell Bud to run that damn circus and let me run my newspaper."

Fred: White was the famous editor of the *Emporia Gazette*? (Yes) When you say "merchant's circus" what was the idea?

Luke: Merchant tickets.

Fred: Oh, merchant tickets. He still used his own Seal Bros. name?

Luke: There was all kinds of different ways they did this. One way they had a guy that went ahead of the show and sold these tickets to the merchants for a penny apiece, and he got the penny. He'd sell this merchant 300 and get \$3.00 there, and this one 400; he'd load this town up with these tickets. He'd wind up \$20, \$30, \$40 a day, which was a lot of money back in those days. Now this merchant would take and give those tickets away, and they were ten and twenty cent tickets to the circus. Without that ticket the price would be double that, see? They did that for about three years, then they had the newspaper tie in, where the merchants didn't have anything to do with it, it was a free ticket in the newspaper, which was really the best deal.

Fred: Well, if this agent was selling a group of tickets to a merchant for a penny apiece, where was the show getting their money out of it?

Luke: They would charge ten and twenty cents on the showgrounds for the tickets. In order to get the reduced price at the circus grounds you had to have one of these tickets.

Fred: Oh, so they had to buy something from the merchant and also buy a ten cent ticket at the showgrounds. Oh, I see.

Luke: And Russell Bros. used that, too. R. M. Harvey was over there and he used it. Also one of the relatives of Lucky Bill. I was looking through the Lucky Bill stuff here one day and the lady I'm talking about is in there. There's very little stuff here on Lucky Bill. It's a shame.

Fred: We'll talk about that later, but I'll tell you something about that.

Luke: But, I could remember a few things, Lucky Bill was a great checker player, a great checker player. Lucky Bill would go to town every day and find who the best checker player was in town, usually they'd wind up at the barber shop playing checkers. And Mrs. Lucky would send to town and tell him it was time for the show to start and he'd send the guys back.

Usually the show was only a block away, he showed those little towns. He'd send the guys back and tell him to ask how many people was there. I he'd said if there was less than thirty people when he went back to the barber shop, he'd tell him to go back and tell them that Mr. Lucky told them to come back tonight and he went on with his checker game.

Fred: Where did Lucky Bill and Honest Bill get their nicknames; or how did they get their nicknames?



Lucky Bill Newton and son Honest Bill. Pfening Archives.

Luke: I have no idea. They come from Quenomo, Kansas. I was out to Lucky's home many many times as a young fellow, and years later. After he got out of show business I used to go by and see him once in a while; then he went out with Honest, and the Honest boys were on some show back east in later years. He used to play checkers with a Japanese fellow, Eiko Ushida, who used to work for my father, and he used to play checkers with people by mail and take as much as a year to play a game--people over in Europe. He was really into this checker game, I mean in a big way. He liked to play checkers with my dad; my dad couldn't beat him. My dad was a pretty good checker player, but not in his class.

Fred: When people were on the show touring at that time, through the depression and all that, what were the kind of pursuits that they had when they weren't in the ring, or practicing, or things that they found personal satisfaction with, besides checkers, let's say? Or wasn't there time for any personal satisfaction?

Luke: There wasn't really too much time for that. My father put Hubert Castle in the circus business, Gus and Ward Bell at the same time. They were all vying for a first prize on a stage in Dallas, Texas, and my dad hired Hubert Castle for \$35 a week--no, \$25 a week; and Gus Bell and his brother, neither one was married at the time, he paid them \$35 a week for the two of them. Hubert did two acts in the show, tight wire act--did the back flip on the tight wire, couldn't do the front but he did the back. And Howard and Gus did a trampoline act with a trampoline with rubber band of

tires around the thing and they did a little comedy. They were with Dad two years, 1932 and 1933. Finally, Seils-Sterling came over and stole Hubert Castle, his name was Hal Silvers then, his real name was Hubert Smith. And then the Ringling show got him and he signed with them, and then he was Hubert Castle with the Ringling show.

Fred: When your dad had this show out at this time, where did the people sleep at night? Did they sleep around the show or did they go to hotels? How did they handle that?

Luke: No, they all had a kind of a house car, a little trailer, or something like that; and Hubert Castle slept in his car. I think the Bell brothers--I don't think they had a car, I don't know where they slept.

Fred: Did your dad have a cookhouse on the show, or did the people make their own meals?

Luke: He had a cookhouse, always had a cookhouse.

Fred: Generally served three meals a day?

Luke: Three meals a day.

Fred: That takes us up to about 1934. Where do we go from there?

Luke: Well in 1934 my dad had one elephant, Eva, he bought two more elephants from Mrs. Hall: Alice and Mabel. I told you the story, I think, about Alice almost killing me, then they took Alice back and paid Mrs. Hall for another elephant. Alice later on killed a couple guys on the Cole show, so that was a good move to get rid of that elephant.

Fred: Why don't you tell us a little bit about your episode with Alice.

Luke: Well, it was just one of those things. We just got the elephants and brought them down. About the first or second day they was there, we decided to take the elephants out for a walk. We went about a block from the barn and started back towards the barn and we decided we'd run the elephants and I, being a kid and having bell bottom pants on and I had the elephant hook just laying up on top of the elephant's ear, I had a cane, and the elephant stepped on my pants and upset me right in front of her--actually, I don't know what happened but I think it happened so quick that I had this cane over her ear and I pulled this elephant down on top of me.

I never did blame the elephant for that. I always figured it was my fault. And they pulled me out from under the elephant, there was three or four guys there and they pulled the elephant off of me. She worked me over pretty good, I guess. And I didn't talk for about six or seven hours after that. They took me up to the house and I



The Seal Bros. Circus midway in 1935. Pfening Archives.

laid on the divan. I often thought about it, cause nobody thought about calling a doctor or anything like that.

Fred: Did this happen right in Emporia?

Luke: No, this happened in Fredonia, Kansas, the year we wintered there. We wintered there two years. We also wintered in Benedict, Kansas. My dad owned a farm there from the time I was in the first grade, so I was 13, so my dad must have bought that in about 1926 or 1927. He sold that farm in 1930; it's still there.

Fred: Did your dad always invest in real estate?

Luke: No. He always owned his winter quarters, usually. We had a beautiful winter quarters in Emporia. Still the prettiest barns that ever been on a circus. They're still there; ring barns, training barn, an elephant barn, horse barn with all box stalls in it, all red tile. Those barns are still setting there just like they was when my dad owned them.

Fred: What are they being used for today?

Luke: I don't really know. Some guy had a garage in that middle barn, I was out there two or three years ago I stopped in, he had an RV repair business inside that barn. He was very nice to me. I just went through that one barn--the elephant barn.

Fred: How did your dad finish off the decade of the 1930s?

Luke: Well, 1934 was a good year for him; 1935 was the biggest year he ever had in show business. My father was very close with about how much money he made, and my mother was just like him. I asked a few times how much money he made in 1935 and I asked my mother one day if he made over \$100,000. She said, "Oh, yes." That's as much as I know, how much they made over \$100,000, I don't know. That is the year my dad built all these barns I talked about in Emporia. He sold that show, Seal Bros. He built a parade on it and at that time I guess it

was the biggest parade that was ever on a truck show. We had eight or nine cages, all pulled by horses, in the parade. Not necessarily horses, one of them had a mule hitch on, one had a six pony hitch on, and then the rest of them were all horses.

We had a white band, about seven pieces; we had a colored band, about five pieces; we had a clown band, about four pieces, and we had a bagpipe band and we had a calliope in the parade, so I don't know how good they were, but they were loud.

Fred: A pretty musical parade, I would say.

Luke: Yeah. We had quite a little lead stock, camels and a lot of horses in the parade, Dad always making the show bigger, so he always had a lot of horses around.

Fred: Who did he sell Seal Bros. to?

Luke: Seal Bros. was sold to Parker and Watts. Ira Watts was not the man who put up the money, the money was put up by a fellow that was involved in the Eagle Pitcher Mining Corporation in Pitcher, Oklahoma, and Parker was the bookkeeper for this company. There was a circus fan that was involved in this that worked for the Eagle Pitcher Mining Company, and I seen him a couple of years ago--well, maybe three or four years ago, when we had the convention in Phoenix, Arizona. I don't know how long ago that was, but he was there and somebody told him I was there and he dug me up. He used to visit around the show. I wasn't with the show, I was supposed to be with the show but I wasn't.

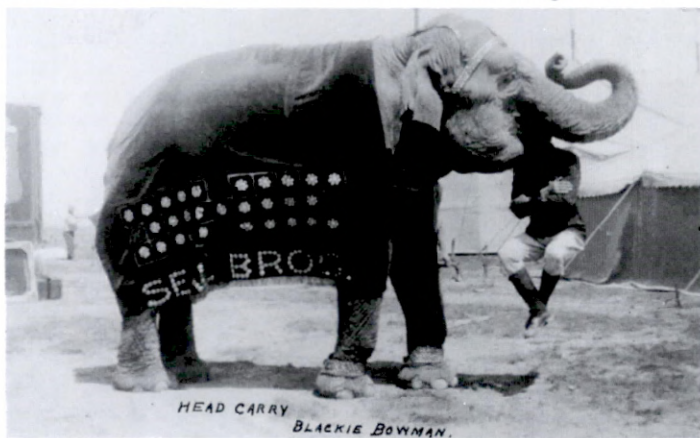
Watts hired me to run concessions. By that time I was running concessions, and I think he wanted to get rid of me. In fact, I'm sure of it, because I could never get the equipment I needed to fix up the concessions department. I kept getting closer and closer, and finally one day I went to him and said, "I've had it." I'll never forget many years later he did everything in the world to try and get me to the Beatty show, he was the manager. I didn't go; I went to Floyd King.

They both went broke, so it didn't make much difference. But, anyway, that show was sold to Parker and Watts in 1937, and the show never did have a losing season. My dad went broke three or four times in his life, but never went broke in the circus business, after once he got started back in the early 1930s. He always wanted to do something else. I don't know why because he was a good circus man and he knew what to do.

One time he went in the dairy business, bought a whole bunch of cows, bought a whole bunch of automatic milking machines, tore all the stalls out of the horse barn and fixed it up for cows. First day that they milked them cows and took the cream to the creamery, they gave him a check for \$3.80 or something, that was the end of that. He actually stayed in the dairy business for one or two days after he went and spent all this money for all those cows. He looked at that and said he could get more money with a popcorn machine.

So then another venture, that one didn't break him, that would have been in 1938, the year he bought Norris Bros. circus. I was there, I was handling concessions. Norris Bros. was a disorganized little show and my dad took one of his liberty acts over there and I don't know what all he took over there. Anyway, the advance was disorganized, so he only had that show out a few weeks; how many weeks I don't know. We closed in eastern Colorado on the 4th of July. He got up set because it wasn't moving to suit him. He sent me on up to the advance and I tried to straighten the advance out. That was almost impossible because there was no towns up there. I come back to the show and I was telling what the condition the advance was and he says, "The hell with it," and he closed it.

Blackie Bowman in a head carry on Seal Bros. in 1937. Pfening Archives.



Fred: Who did he buy Norris Bros. from?

Luke: Charles Lamont.

Fred: Is that the same Charles Lamont from Salem, Illinois who had the Lamont Bros. Circus out?

Luke: I would assume so. But, anyway, we took that thing back into there and that winter the Cole show had the fire and that was when he gave Mr. Terrell the money he needed or he wouldn't have sold those three baby elephants. And he got those baby elephants for \$20,000; not just the elephants, there was several camels involved and there was an eight horse liberty act involved, and a carload of stuff, and he gave him \$20,000 for it and brought it into Emporia. That was also the year the Tom Mix show was sold. He went to El Paso, Texas, and found Mix's manager, Dale Turney, and he was selling stuff down there.

My dad got sick while he was down there, he called me on the phone at home. He says, "I want you to come down here, and some of this stuff is going to be sold and I want you to buy some of this stuff, I gotta go home." So I got on the train and went down there and he gave me five or six (I don't know how many) checks that he signed, blank checks, he said if you find anything you think we need, bring it back. Well, we brought an elephant back, we paid \$600 for her, a truck and a semi and sent that home. I stayed there.

So this is kind of a cute story, I was riding a streetcar one day in El Paso and I look over and I see these red semis setting over there--and I said that's where them Tom Mix trucks are, he said his trucks were all gone. I got off the street car at the next stop and went back and, sure enough, Tom Mix trucks. This guy had bought all these Tom Mix trucks setting there. It was a Diamond T dealer, and I'd tell you his name but I can't do it. I gave this story to the magazine there and I told them what his name was. But, anyway, I got ahold of this guy and we went back there and one truck in particular was a stake driver that was built for Tom Mix by Charlie somebody, a famous builder around railroad shows.

Fred: Oh, Cap Curtis?

Luke: Cap Curtis, wasn't his name Charlie?

Fred: No, William H. Curtis.

Luke: Anyway, this was built by Curtis, it was a three handed one, drilled three stakes at a time, two mains and one extra; so this thing is setting there--and Tom Mix did take care of his trucks, his trucks were all in very good shape, well I knew that from reputation. I said to this guy,

"How much will you take for that truck there?" He says, "Oh, I don't want to sell that." I said, "Why not?" He said, "Well it would take two or three days for my men to take all that junk off the top of that truck." And I said, "Well, I'll tell you, you can just leave that junk on there, and when I get it home I'll have my fellows take it off." And he said, "In a case like that, I'll sell it to you for \$250." I said, "I'll take it." So now the next one was a gasoline truck, I started to say water wagon, 'cause we made a water wagon out of it. The Socony Vacuum Company-Mobil Oil & Gas had made it for Tom Mix, all chrome plated. I'm telling you this, for the time, was a beautiful tank on this truck, and I said, "What about that one?" And said, "Well, that's the same as that other one, you want to buy one of them tractors or them semis, that's too much work to take off." I said, "Well, just leave the stuff on there." He said, "Well, \$250." I said, "I'll take that one."

So I bought a side show pole wagon, paid \$250 for the trailer, \$250 for the truck. This guy had \$250 on the brain, I guess. And then I bought the cookhouse truck, semi; and then I bought another one, I can't remember what this other one was.

Anyway, I bought five trucks there. And so, about this time, I haven't even seen this man selling this stuff, Mr. Turney, he had already sold this, see? And he really must have given them to this guy, because I absolutely stole them. God knows this Mr. Turney had no business being manager of the show to my way of thinking. Anyway, Dale Turney gets off the airplane and so I went to see him, and he said they really didn't have anything else to sell. He said he had one barn down there full of stuff and he would sell the stuff that's in the barn. So we go down there, they had all the cookhouse equipment in there to feed a

couple hundred people on the Mix show, 250--I don't know how many there were. It was a big show, and it was all there; pots, pans, knives, forks, you know, those Army type serving plates, they had all that. The other stuff, they had all the sound system equipment in there, and they had saddles and bridles, spec wardrobe, this was stacked all over the place. I said, "Well, Mr. Turney, my father didn't authorize me to buy anything, in fact, he don't know about those five trucks setting out there," and I just paused. I said, "I'm apt to be in grave trouble when I get home." And he said, "Well, I want to go back to Hollywood and everything is gone but this. Get me an offer on it." I said, "I'll give you a hundred dollars for everything in the barn." He said, "Oh, my God," and he jumped about eight feet up. And I said, "Well, I'm sorry, I'm not even authorized to spend a hundred."

He finally sold me everything in the barn for a hundred dollars. It took two semi trailers to load the stuff up. I backed the cookhouse truck up and took all the cookhouse stuff and then backed the pole truck up.

So, I started home, I promoted some drivers, and I'll never forget the morning I drove in with them five trucks strung out there, and my dad come out on the porch and said, "My God, Luke, what have you done?" I said, "I don't think you'll feel that way about it when you find out what I paid for this stuff." We were talking about four or five thousand dollars, counting the elephant, for these five trucks and all the stuff that was there.

When he found out, why I was his fair-haired boy around there for a couple of weeks. I was in good shape.

The Anderson family in 1938. Left to right, Francis, Luke, Laura and Bud.



That's quite a little story. But I told that to Fred Pfening and he liked the part the part about the trucks; he liked the part about me riding a street car and seeing them. That's a true story.

Anyway, so those three elephants, and then he bought that elephant from Max Gruber, that rode the tricycle and did the bowling act, which is probably one of the great all-time elephant acts that was ever in this country. So those five elephants that were on the show in 1939; Babe, Modoc, Empress and Judy. Modoc, Empress and Judy, my mother eventually acquired. My father and mother were divorced, and they were sold to Terrell Jacobs. Then his wife Dolly worked those elephants for quite a number of years. They were down here in Peru, Indiana.

Fred: Was your dad's show in 1939 still called Bud Anderson Circus or "Anderson Bros.?"

Luke: Bud E. Anderson's Jungle Oddities. And he got that title from Max Gruber who had trained this elephant, Eva, come from Germany, I guess from a famous trainer in Germany, because nobody else ever trained an elephant to do the things this elephant did, and when he bought this elephant it came in a truck that had "Jungle Oddities" wrote all over the sides. I guess Dad liked to save money on a paint job, so he just put "Bud Anderson's" on top of it, that was the name of the new show "Bud Anderson's Jungle Oddities."

That show was out two years, done very good business, made money, and him and my mother separated. My father kept the farm, he kept one elephant, Eva. My mother got more elephants, the elephants my father imported—which wound up being two, India and Bunny, so there was seven elephants the last year we was out, 1940. My mother got six elephants, she got all the trucks, all the equipment and tents. All he kept was the eight horse liberty act, Eva and a zebra. He worked with a zebra, two trucks and the farm; and they split whatever money they had. Well, actually, it would have been a pretty fair division, outside of the fact that the war come along and made all these trucks were worth two or three times more than they were when my dad made the split. Then she sold Modoc, Empress and Judy to Terrell Jacobs and she leased Babe to Little Bob Atterbury. Later in the year he wasn't paying so she took Babe to the Arthur Bros. show.

I took India and Bunny to the Kelly-Miller show just before I went into the service. I was thinking that that was the first elephants that Kelly-Miller ever had, but I was over there one day when I was in the Army. I took a picture and there was another elephant in the background, so they must have had an elephant when I took those two elephants over there. Later on, my mother took those elephants to the Arthur show, and sold Babe to Martin L. Arthur.

My father took out a small show in 1948. He went broke again, ran out of money. He went in the quarter horse business, bought a five thousand acre ranch to put his horses on and bought \$5,000 and \$10,000 stallions; all of this was unsuccessful.

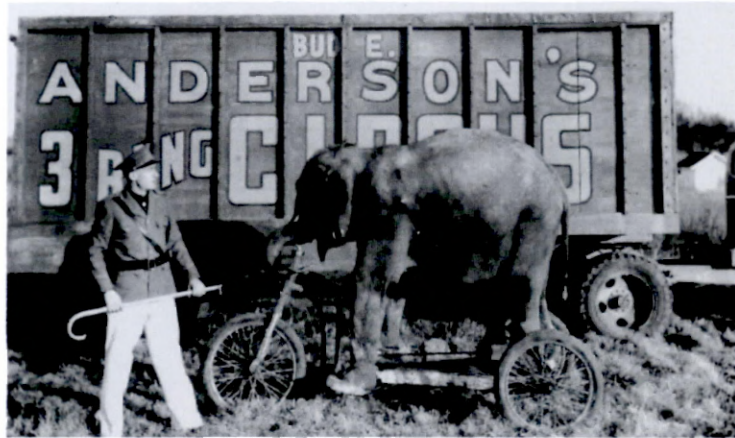
So he started this little show with practically no money, bought three or four new trucks, a new International, a couple of REO Speedwagons, a new Mack, bought them all on time. I had the concessions on Jimmy Cole's show. In the meantime, while all this was going on, I was with 101 Ranch, I had concessions over there the first year I was out of the Air Corps, had a very big year, the concessions part of it had a really big year. I made \$26,000-\$27,000.

The next year I was on two shows. I was on Yankee-Patterson, lasted about nine weeks, Jimmy Woods was the owner; and I went from there to DeWayne Bros. owned by Ted DeWayne. I had concessions over there, and I had an elephant, her name was Shirley.

Fred: Let me back up just a minute here, Luke. You mentioned about the elephant that your father imported. Tell us a little about that.

Luke: Well, somewhere my dad made a connection with a man that lived in Burma that sold elephants, and this fellow, my dad made a deal with him for three elephants; and these three elephants, delivered to New York City,

Bud Anderson and India the bicycle riding elephant in 1939.



cost less than \$2,000. Even then they were very cheap elephants, especially baby elephants. Baby elephants at that time were going for \$2,000-\$2,500 apiece. So the elephants come. He got a letter from this man and he had shipped him four elephants instead of three, but he said one of these elephants was not physically in good shape and might not even make it to this country, which was true. It died on the boat. And he sent two lesser pandas with them, that my dad had ordered; one of those died on the boat and one died in winter quarters after about two or three weeks. They never got to be on the show. India and Bunny was the two elephants, and dad had five, which made seven in 1940.

Fred: India and Bunny were their names?

Luke: India and Bunny.

Fred: The animals landed in New York and were shipped out to Kansas?

Luke: Well, my dad went back and got them. Mack McDonald went after the elephants.

Fred: Was McDonald around your dad's show at that time?

Luke: Yeah, he come over there in 1939, and at that time was an elephant handler on the Ringling show, never broke any elephants. First elephants he ever broke were Modoc, Empress and Judy; and he had two fellows that come from Shell Bros. circus, Tig McCue, who was on elephants over there, he didn't work elephants on Dad's show but that was his job on Shell Bros., and Matt Lourish, who was in the horse department but also knew a little bit about elephants, and my dad, who knew how to rig horses to lay them down and so on, and between my dad and Tig McCue and Mac they got them broke. Mac tells the story better than anybody else, that they had so much rigging on this elephant it was a wonder it didn't fall down instead of just laying down. But, anyway, they got the elephants to lay down, that was the kind of the number one thing. I got a good story about training elephants, too, that I did in later years. Anyway, that was Mac's start, and Mac was there until they split and my father and mother split up the show.

Fred: Why don't we go back to about 1948-49 and pick that back up?

Luke: Well, in 1948 my dad put this little show out. He'd been out making fairs with this liberty act, and he was with the Jimmy Cole show one year up

in New York. He had Eva the elephant up there, the liberty act, and he messed around with the concession department. I don't know, it must have been while I was in the Army, but that I really don't know much about it. Later on I worked with Jimmy Cole, in fact I was with Jimmy Cole in 1948, when my dad put his show out. I hadn't been with my dad since 1940, I'd been on these other shows, I was with Jimmy Cole one year. He was a very nice man to work for, a real gentleman. But, anyway, in 1948 the Jimmy Cole show was only out, I think, 23-24 weeks. The show didn't exactly go under but had a very bad year. It had a terrific spring, I got all the money I made over there the first ten or twelve weeks it was out. After that I just kind of broke even the rest of the year, but I stayed all year, and I had all the concessions. But, I'd had a good year.

So I went back home in 1948 to Emporia and my dad had this little show out in Oklahoma and I went down there, and it was kind of a disorganized sort of a thing. He closed it and took the beginning steps to winter, and told me, "It looks like I'm going to lose these two trucks, I can't make the payments on them." And I said, "Well, just give me the paper work and I'll make the payments on the trucks this winter, four of them," which I did. So I went over the next year with the stands. He had an old tent that was sewed up, and he had a pretty good year with the stuff, made about \$40,000--\$45,000 with it. Wintered in California. And he spent all this money, sent me back to Chicago. I bought a new tent, a 90 with three 40s, and wanted another elephant so I went to Mr. Arthur, who had Babe, my mother had sold him, and I made a deal and bought Babe back. So he had two elephants over there, I don't know where the other one come from. Anyway, we opened up in the spring of the year. Business was great starting off, we went through Nevada with terrific business, we got into Idaho and we had the coldest weather I've ever seen. And we did absolutely nothing around there for about six weeks. And dad had the show way too heavy. That's the first time I'd ever seen him do that. I never did interfere with anything he did, or said anything about anything he did. He ran the show, I ran the concessions. But I could see he had way too heavy a performance, a side show, good center piece union band on it, costs a lot of money. And, anyway, it



Bud Anderson's Seal Bros. Circus ticket semi in 1949. Bob MacDougall collection.

got to where he couldn't make the pay days, so Dad called everybody together one day and told them he had enough money to pay anybody off that wanted to leave, and the ones that stayed were going to take their chances just like he did. My dad did that once before, that was just the way he did it. If they wanted to go he had enough money to pay them in full, but if they stayed they could take their chances; nobody left.

Anyway, that was just about the time (1950) my dad got killed. He was either two or three weeks behind in pay at the time he was killed in Miles City, Montana. Well, his wife and I, we hardly spoke.

Fred: This is your stepmother, your father's second wife?

Luke: So we got into kind of a serious thing that I wanted to see the show go on, so I went to her and propositioned her. I said, "Now, look, I'll let you handle all the money (I knew it would have to be that to get along with her to start with) and you let me run the show." By the way, I had \$10,000 in it. I give my dad \$10,000, that's where he got the money to buy the elephant. He had enough money to buy the big top, a couple of new trucks, a new advance truck; he bought a lot of new stuff that year, but when it come to the elephant, he didn't have enough money so I put up the money for that. \$10,000 is what I had in the show. So I said to her that I would try to keep this thing going until I get my \$10,000 back, and we'll just go along and try to get along. I said, "You'll be in charge of the office, in charge of the budget, and let me handle everything else." So she agreed to this. So away we go.

The sun finally come out and we started doing a little business, nothing big, but we took in more money than we spent. So one day I sent everybody up to the office to pick up an extra week's pay that we were behind, and the office man paid it. Everybody on the show got a week's pay, back pay; we were behind three weeks, I think, I'm not sure. So

when she found this out, she blew her stack. Well, I should have said something to her about it. But, I was in charge of the show, here you are, so that was when our big trouble started.

Unbeknownst to me, she called Si Rubens up and Si, I assume,--he'd been my father's partner with Great American Victory Circus that went out during the

war and they made a lot of money at that time--so I assume that Si advised her to close the show. So she gets up one morning and she closed the show.

Fred: Now this was while you were making good money with it?

Luke: Well, not good money, but we were making more than we were throwing and this was, I believe, on July 4. Anyway we spent July 4 on the lot, the show closed. Whether that was the next day, either we closed the show on July 3 or 4th, I think the 3rd, cause we were on that lot on the 4th. So she went around and told everybody on the show that there was no money--which was a damn lie--and they could just all go home. And she also told everybody that she was going to make it a point to see that I didn't get nothing out of it. And so my wife and I just sat there and didn't say much. So she moved this thing to Portland, Oregon, and this office man made a deal with a guy who had a drive-in theater to park all this stuff at the back of this drive in theater.

About this time I got a call from North Carolina or somewhere, somebody who was with Si Ruben's show, calls me up and tells me the whole story, that Si has--I don't even know anything about this--and he's on the phone with her every day and they're going to bring all the animals and the new big top and about three or four truck loads of stuff, and they're going to leave me the rest of it for my ten grand.

So, being in this business a long time, I found out through the process the show not only owed these actors some money, the show was two months behind in their ticket tax to the government. We weren't far enough behind that the government would step in and bother the show, or anything like that, so I went and got ahold of a lawyer, unbeknownst to her, in Oregon City, Oregon, and told him the whole story. He brought in an Internal Revenue guy and I explained this whole thing to him. I had the taxes they owed, I don't know how I got ahold of this. He said that it hadn't gone far enough for them to step in. I

said, "Well, I don't really want to step in. I do want to step in if she actually takes this stuff and starts moving." So I got a local sheriff there and made arrangements with him to stop any of this stuff from moving, in case it started to move. The Internal Revenue fellow put ads in the paper about fifty mile away that this stuff was all going to be sold. She didn't know anything about this. All of a sudden she sneaks off with four of these trucks. Well, she didn't get two blocks when somebody told me, and I went and pulled the distributor caps off all of them out in the middle of the highway. I called the sheriff and said, "Well, she did it." He was out there in about 30 minutes, put plasters on all of them and moved them back. Now, she's in a motel and she don't show up around there. I never talked to her at all. And so they had this sale of this stuff, well, I didn't have too much money, I had maybe about \$25,000.

I called my mother and explained the whole thing and said that this thing was going to go up for sale and I have no idea what it's going to sell for; but I said I'd like to have another \$20,000. She sent me \$20,000, so I had \$45,000. And so they started this sale out there one morning and she drove up while it was going on and if you ever heard such screaming. She was causing quite a disturbance and I asked the sheriff if he couldn't settle her down a little bit, and he went over and advised her that if she would like to keep that car she was driving, she'd better get out of there or they'd take it away from her. So I purchased the circus complete for \$13,500 and some odd dollars. I got a deal from MGM Studios for the two elephants to work in a picture. I took them to Los Angeles and left the trucks there.

I really had no intention of taking the show out, I was going to sell it; and I made two or three potential deals, one with friends of mine to put up part of the money to put the show out the next year. Everybody was for it until I asked them for the money, then I lost them all. I called my mother up and explained the situation to her--now this was not my step-mother, but my mother--and I told her I'd probably need a little more money, about \$10,000 would do it, I think.

Fred: Was that in addition



The Wallace & Clark canvas spool truck in 1951. Pfening Archives.

to the \$20,000 she'd already given you?

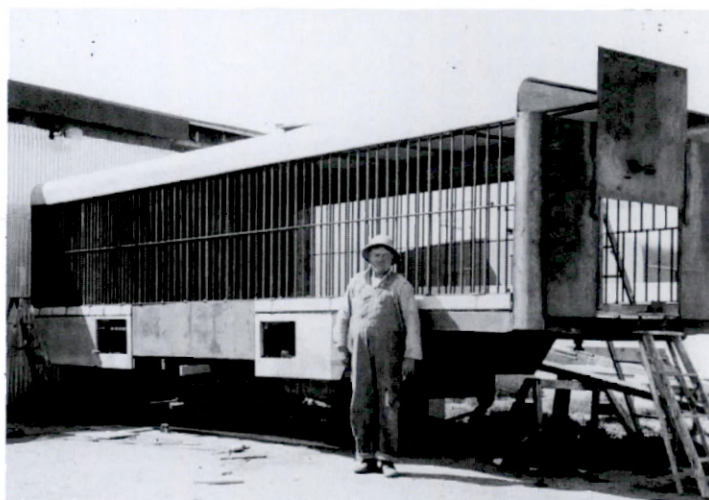
Luke: No, I'd already given her that back. That was never used, that was "just in case."

So a couple of days later I got a letter from her with a check for double of what I'd asked for with a little note that said, "It always cost more than you thought it was going to." Which it did. I spent it all before I got it home. I got a new canvas loader made by Wayne Sanguin of Hugo, Oklahoma, and I bought a hippopotamus to go with the hippopotamus cage, and I acquired some camels from Louis Goebels, and we put the show out. I had a real big year with it, tremendous year. Went up through Oregon and Washington and all those states and we closed in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Business was good all year with the exception of about two weeks, possibly three weeks, in Texas; the rest of the year was very good.

Fred: What was the name of the show?

Luke: Wallace & Clark. So then I built a new water wagon, a stake driver, bought some new trucks and, oh, I bought another new big top, got that

The Wallace & Clark hippo den semi trailer under construction in Venice, California in March 1951. The man is Wimpy Fisher of the elephant department. Pfening Archives.



made by Slim Somerville in Kansas City, Missouri. A 90 with a 40 and four 20s for a big top. The idea of that was we could put web girls between each and that would give us not actually five rings, but we had a place to hang web, same as you would in a five ring show; and ladders and stuff like

that. It worked out very good for us. Then I had a marquee made, which was the only one in existence, it was 40 foot wide--a pretty big marquee--and I don't really know if it was 60 foot long or 80 foot long, but we put the animals in the marquee. Had a proscenium up close to the front, had the elephants, camels, and the hippopotamus we had in the side show. We had a 50 with two 30s for the side show. And we had another cage in the side show. The lead stock went in the marquee. It still sounds like a good idea.

Fred: It was certainly novel.

Luke: It was different. And I spent a lot of money on the show. In fact, we spent about all the money we made that year; we'd had a big year and we spent all the money. I got a new trailer, a new car, new pickup to pull the trailer, and all new stuff to go inside the big top. We opened in Hot Springs, Arkansas, opened under the Elks. We had a big day there, and we got into and done real good in Kentucky. Got into Pennsylvania right in the middle of a coal strike and business went *kablooey*.

We were really doing nothing, and I canceled all the route, made about six moves into Wisconsin and did very well there. And the minute we got out of Wisconsin, our business went *kablooey* again. Finally we closed the show early, wintered in Cherryville, Kansas; didn't have a very good year. Took in enough money to winter the show without having to borrow any money or anything like that.

Then we put the show out in 1953. Went back into Kentucky, went into Canada, did an outlandish business in Canada. The show cost \$900 a day to run in Canada, cost \$750 a day to run it in the United States, and the \$150 extra in Canada was because of the difference in money values. We had many, many days of \$2,500-\$3,000 in Canada; one \$5,500 day in Reeder, Saskatchewan. Came back into the United States, did terrible business

for about a week or ten days, then we got to the coast in Washington and did very good business in Washington and Oregon and in California.

We had a tremendous year, but in the process of having this big year, we had all gravel roads in Canada and we had tore the trucks up pretty bad. I had a very good mechanic and we got into Norco, California, where we wintered, and I kept the mechanic on the payroll and told him to go out there and tell me how much it's going to cost to put this show back in the same condition it was when we opened up in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Well, we had trucks that needed to be replaced, semis that needed this and that, he came back and told me it would cost about \$20,000-\$30,000, so I sent him home, he lived up in Healsberg, California. I went in to my wife and said, "I know how to make \$25,000 real easy, without doing any work." She says, "How's that?" I said, "Just not take the show out." I stopped right there, like that. And that's what we did. That was the end of the Wallace & Clark Circus.

Fred: Where did you come up with the title for Wallace & Clark

Luke: The same way we did with Seal Bros., just sitting around talking. In fact, the original title was going to be Wallace & Kellogg, after Wallace and Kellogg, Idaho, two towns fifteen miles apart up in Idaho. And my wife said she didn't think Kellogg sounded like a circus name; why don't you call it Clark, after the Clark family, famous performers, so that's how the Clark got in there. I don't think the Clarks even know that.

Fred: Well, I was just going to say then that the Clark came from like the Ernest Clark in the flying act.

Luke: From the Clarkonians.

Fred: It wasn't from the M. L. Clark Circus, then?

Luke: No, they were friends of ours.

Fred: Well, they were probably flattered. Well, let me ask one thing. You were obviously aware of the Hagenback-Wallace Circus and Ben Wallace, but that didn't serve as an inspiration for "Wallace"?

Luke: No, we just picked that title up, and later on there was a fellow that used that title out in California for a year or two in the fall. So I sold him some equipment and he used the title mainly because I gave him all the advertising papers that said "Wallace & Clark" on it. That's quite a thing, right there. Then I decided I was going to take this hippopotamus and build a pit show with it, and I was gonna show still dates, was the idea. I built this thing--I'll send you a picture--on a semi and it looked kinda one of those



This big stand of Clyde Beatty paper was covered by Wallace & Clark bill-posters in 1951.

gorilla shows, but mine was longer and bigger. So just about the time I got this thing completed, why Herb Walters called me up and wanted to know if I would take it over to the Cole & Walters show. And I said that I would consider it, but what about the concessions? He said I could have the concessions. Now, I'm worried, so I said, "What's this all going to cost me?" And he said, \$100 a week." And I said, "For the concessions?" And he said, "No, for the whole thing, the hippo show and the concessions." Well, you never seen this show, but I used to top the side show over there. Every day, I don't know what the side show's got, I got to warm up, cause I opened before they did, and even around that road show, that seats about 1,000-1,100, well I'd have a \$100-\$150 day, and I'm only paying a \$100 a week for the concessions and the hippo show; so I had the most terrific year you'd ever seen on this little show.

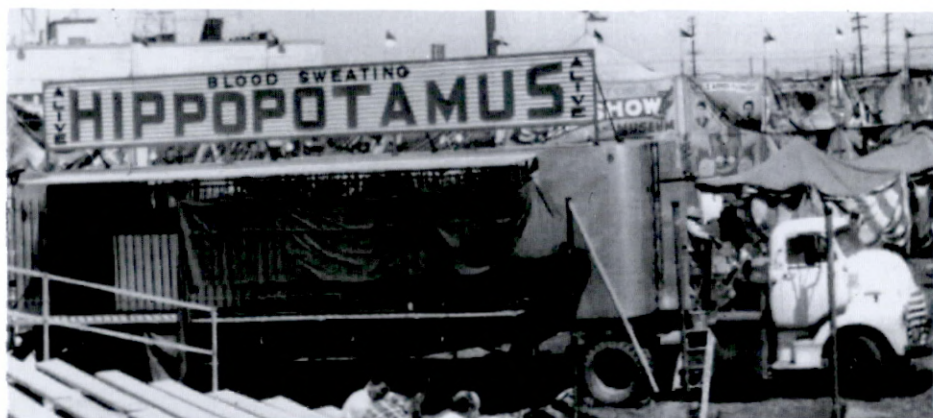
Fred: What year was that you were on Cole & Walters?

Luke: That was in 1954. I was just over there one year. Well, they didn't want no more of that, hell, I was topping the side show. The side show guy

The Anderson hippo semi on the Clyde Beatty Circus midway in 1955.

was a friend of mine and we used to compare what we'd do, day in and day out; and I was making more money than they got in the sideshow.

Then in 1955, I took that set up to the Beatty show. We got up into northern California and Ward-Bell was going to Alaska. Gus Bell had been a friend of mine ever since he was a kid around my Dad's show--and he wanted me to go to Alaska with him. So I took the hippo show to Alaska. I broke more shows--that show went broke, but I got about \$8,000-\$10,000 up there them three weeks in Alaska. And then I played still [dates] coming all the way back; and I don't know how I got away with it, I had no permission to show in Canada or anything, and I showed all those little towns coming back from Canada with that hippo show. Oh, I had acquired a baby elephant they had on the Ward-Bell Circus; they sold the show up there. They just sold the trucks, they sold the horses, everything, so they got this little elephant and they got no way to get him back down here. They had just bought the elephant, gave \$3,500 for it. This Dodge dealer down in Gainesville, Texas put up the money to buy the little elephant and sent it up to them, he was only about this tall. So they had sold the trucks and they got no way to get him home, and the Dodge dealer come to me and asked if I wanted the elephant. I said,



"Not really, I'm getting along real good the way I am and I already own an elephant down in California, I've got him working."

He said, "Well, you'd give something for him, wouldn't you." I said, "Yeah, I'd give \$1,500 for it." He said, "Oh, my God." I said, "Well, I don't want it, so you can take it or leave it." He sold it to me. So I take the little elephant and stand him out in front of the hippo show; just pull into those little towns, 600-800 population, whatever; and took them off. And I had days like \$380-\$420 and we got to Vancouver, British Columbia, that big fair is going on, we moved into that fair. I think it was twelve days or something, I don't remember, we did very good there.

Now, we're just going home. One day in particular was very interesting, in Whitehorse in Yukon Territory, I set up right downtown, right across from the Elks Lodge, (nice bar in the Elks Lodge) and we'd open up for an hour or two. I'd checked into the hotel on the other corner right across that way, so we run the hippo show about two hours and get a little money and close up and go into the Elks Lodge and buy everybody a drink, see. We'd sit around and drink until the money kind of thinned down and then we'd got back out and open up the hippo show. We only had to go about 40 feet to open this thing up. I stayed there for three days. I'd only intended to be in there one day, but this was such a good set up with the hotel here, the hippo show here, the bar right there; so we played three days in that one.

So when I left Vancouver, I run into the Bailey-Cristiani Circus playing the fair in Salem, Oregon. So we set it up out in front of them. They were inside a building, they had no side show, no nothing; and all these other pit shows in there, those guys opened up all day so I wouldn't open up all day. I'd wait until about thirty minutes before the circus opened. I had two speakers you could hear for nine miles, so we'd open this thing up, tell them about this killer hippo with tusks about as big around as my arm, the only animal among all in Africa that crocodiles were actually afraid of, could run under water at 40 miles an hour, and actually sweat blood. I really had a nice pitch for this thing. And I'd line 'em up in front of this thing, just before the Cristiani show would open. And for the night show, I'd do the same thing, and I closed these other pit shows there at the fair, they're opened all day and I'm getting more money than they are and I'm only open about an hour a day, or two

hours a day, whatever. I worked the comeouts, too. And then I went on down to my home in Norco, California, had five acres down there with a nice home on it. And that was 1955.

In 1956 I went with the King show. Floyd King called me up and he wanted some money and wanted to buy the canvas truck. I still had a lot of these trucks. I had sold the big top to a movie studio, and a fellow by the name of Gene Holter had Babe leased. And a baby elephant I trained to do an act, which is kinda cute, the fact that I had never trained an elephant. I had a friend who had trained quite a few elephants, Mr. George Emerson of the MGM studios, and I used to call him up at night and I'd say, "George, tomorrow I'm going to start working on teaching the little elephant how to lay down." And he'd explain to me everything that you'd do. The next day I would do this, and over a period of a few days I'd have the elephant laying down, and I'd call and say, "Now, George, I want the little elephant to stand on his head. How do you do that?" And he'd go to great lengths on the telephone telling me what to do, and I'd do it, and that worked. And I trained the whole act on the telephone.

I got a contract with KTLA television studio in Los Angeles for, I believe, twenty six weeks at \$400 a week for this little elephant on this KTLA television circus; Wally Ross, he worked for me, got \$100 a week for working the elephant, and I got the rest of it. Then I got the little elephant home right after that took place and a guy by the name of Rudy Jacobi wanted to buy the little elephant, so we sold her to him for \$5,500. That didn't work out for Jacobi, so he sold the little elephant to Bill Woodcock,

Norman Anderson and his baby elephant Sue.



and Bill changed her name from Susie, that's what I called her after my daughter, to his wife's name. I'm trying to think what his wife's name is, I get terrible with names, "Babe," Sadie was her name but they called her "Babe." Eventually Sadie wound up with the Carson & Barnes show and was killed by eating some . . . that stuff they kill grass with, there was some on the lot one day. So the big elephant, Babe, was with Gene Holter for a number of years, he finally purchased her from me.

Then that year (1956) I went to the King show. Floyd bought my canvas truck and I loaned him \$10,000 to get the show out. The show had a very short season, went broke; but it was out long enough that I got my \$10,000 back. In fact I had a very good season there, because it was a big show and the hippo show did very well; and one of the reasons it did very well was that day after day they wouldn't get the side show up, so I got the morning business and the afternoon business all by myself. Of course, I had concessions, too. And in the middle of the year I went over to the Mills show with the hippo show. I was there a couple of weeks, and I got call from Jack Turner of the Carson & Barnes show wanting to know if I would come over there and bring the hippo show and take the concessions; which I did, and I was with the Carson & Barnes show three years. In the second year it was out I took on the added chore of routing the show, because Jack didn't know anything about Oregon or Washington or the western states, so I routed the show for him, no charge. And I did very well over there.

After three years there I went over with the James Christy show one year. Then I was back in Los Angeles and was in the process of buying the Cole & Walters show and I went fishing in Blythe, California, and found this resort, 80 acres on the Colorado river, and instead of buying the Cole & Walters show I bought the resort, and have been there ever since.

Referring to Bud E. Anderson's Great American Victory Circus, I think it was out for two years, put together out of used trucks and whatever he could get while the war was going on. Dad didn't own an elephant, they rented an elephant. Her name was Susie Q. I can remember the name of the elephant, but can't remember the name of the guy who owned her.

Fred: Where did your dad frame it?

Luke: It went out of Emporia. My dad had a few horses on there, and

some of the people that were on there was the Frazier family and a juggling act, the Cole family, they were there; and I don't really know who else was there, but it was generally believed that Si Rubens owned part of that show. That was my Dad's fault, 'cause he never did straighten people out. He didn't care what people thought. But what brought that all about was the fact that my father give Si Rubens 25% of the profits of the show, and he was to run the office and everything; so he did get 25%, but he didn't own 25%. That's neither here nor there, but that's something that needs to be straightened out. That's where Si Rubens got enough money to put out Rogers Bros. Circus, with that 25%.

That was a small show, I seen the show once when I was in the Air Corps. I think it was about 70 with three 30s, something like that. I caught it somewhere in Wyoming, I don't know exactly where now; but I was just there for a few hours. I was trying to think who else was on that show. The guy that married the Durvisky girl that had the show that was out a couple of years that got real big money down in Louisiana and Mississippi. Know who I'm talking about?

Fred: No.

Luke: Boy, I'm getting terrible about remembering people's names. She was a wire walker, a very great wire walker. But that was all. The other thing about my dad that a lot of people didn't know, he was quite a trainer of animals, horses. He at one time trained horses on Russell Bros. Circus, Sam B. Dill Circus, Barney Bros. Circus, and his own circus. I don't think he ever had any on the Cole show. He didn't particularly care whether he trained them or somebody else did. He was interested in the end results; but he trained some nice eight horse liberty acts that were around the country, and some nice high school horses.

He had a white stallion that went to the King show, and a fine high school horse; then he had some high school horses that Heyer had trained. He had some high school horses from the 101 Ranch when they went broke. One thing he trained a lot of, that very few people know about, was pick-out ponies. He must have trained out eight or nine of them in his lifetime, and they were around the country, here and there. I know the Sam B. Dill show had one and they didn't even



Bud Anderson working his twelve horse liberty act.

know they had it, a pick-out pony that my dad trained.

Fred: What was the story about the liberty pony or the liberty horse act that your dad trained and sold to somebody and they didn't know how to work it, or they had a problem with distance with the horses?

Luke: Oh, that was a pick-out pony, that wasn't a liberty act. That was a pick-out pony he trained for some fellow in Red Hook, New York, at about—I'm guessing about the year, because I know there was no money around the house—I'd say 1926 or 1927, something like that. We crated that thing up, I'd have been about 10-12 years old, and shipped it out under canvas on the Santa Fe railroad. After my dad give all the instructions on how to work it, a couple of weeks he got a letter back from this guy and he said he did everything my dad told him to and the pony failed to respond. My dad read this letter of all the things this guy did, and my dad told him to take two steps backward and do the same thing he'd been doing. In a couple of weeks my dad got a letter from the guy saying the pony worked perfect. I thought that was kind of a cute thing, that he could tell from that letter what the guy was doing wrong.

He had some great liberty acts. He bought that Greer act, that 12 horse Greer act, which I think although my dad didn't train it, he worked it, and he could really work horses was the best liberty act I think I've ever seen in this country. They started in where all the rest of the horses left off; even D. R. Miller mentioned that. He was watching his new horses one day, he says, "You know, these horses are not as good as your dad's horses." He wasn't buttering me up, he meant it, 'cause I'd heard Does say before what he thought of that act. And we had a nice eight horse act at the same time. It wasn't nothing unusual for us, a little bitty show, to

have two liberty acts on the show. But these horses, the Greer act, all did the double waltz, the first four walked the ring curb with their front feet, the second four walked with their hind feet, the third four walked with their front feet, which made, I think the back horse walked with all four feet, if the ring curb was wide enough he'd put the back horse on top of the ring curb.

Fred: One thing I do want to ask just a little bit about, the circumstances of your father's death. Was this an accident of some type?

Luke: To start with, we had this REO truck that he hauled the horses with, he wouldn't let nobody drive it but him, and I think the town was... I'd have to look at a map to be sure. I think it was Baker, Montana, and Dad told me the day before he got killed, he says, "You know my brakes have gone out on that truck." So I went to town to try to get some parts, there wasn't anything in town, and I ordered new brakes for it from Seattle to be sent into Miles City, Montana, that was where we was going. So I pulled the wheels and did what I could to it. I couldn't do anything with it with no brake parts, so the next morning why I followed my dad and out about 40 miles out there was a little coffee place he stopped to get some coffee. I had a convertible, it was a nice morning and I had the top down and my wife was with me, so he come out and I pulled up behind the truck and went up and sat down and talked a few minutes, and I told him, "Why don't you get in the car and go down with Frances and I'll take this truck in." He said, "Well, it's got no brakes on it." I said, "I know it, but I can handle that thing." He said, "No, you go ahead, we've got a light plant there that's not running, you see if you can get that light plant going and I'll take it slow."

So, about two miles from there I started down this hill and I don't know if I said anything to my wife or not, but I thought it if I didn't, (it's so long I don't remember), "I ought to turn around and go up to the top of that hill," 'cause this sucker had about a 6% grade and was about three miles long, and down at the bottom was a curve... it wasn't a sharp curve, a big curve. Anyway, I didn't go back, I went on in to Miles City and was there about an hour; had this light plant all tore apart, and some guy came in and said, "Your dad just got killed." He got

killed right there on that curve on that road. The guy riding with him never got a scratch, and it killed Dad instantly. The horses, I actually don't know what horses was in this, some parts of both liberty acts must have been in there because they was four, five or six horses out of the Greer act that were killed, and there were only three or four of the Sorrell acts that ever showed up again. They wanted me to go out there. I wouldn't go, and some farmer . . . this is some kind of a far fetched unbelievable story . . . was a man that worked for Mr. Greer and helped train those horses that lived right there. And he gathered those horses, what was left of them and took them over to his place. He come in and I talked to him, and I said, "For the time being, if you don't mind, just keep the horses."

When we left town we didn't take any of those horses with us, oh, yes we did, we took four Sorrell horses with us. And the truck, I had met the Chevrolet dealer in that town about four of five years before, I used to sell banners-signs on the sides of the elephant in the parade and I sold this guy a banner and got kind of friendly with him, and I went down and told him the situation and said, "Would you get that truck and junk it, or do whatever you can do with it. I don't ever want to see it again." He said he would do that for me, and I gave him my address and told him to take some for himself and send me some; which he did. About six months later I got a check from him for \$750 for the wrecked truck, and boy, it was wrecked. That thing was wiped out.

The guy who had the horses wrote me a couple of letters and he said, "I enjoy having them and there's no charge, you can leave them here as long as you want to, if you ever want them." But I never did go back and get them. I probably should have. He told me three or four of them, there must have been . . . he must have had at least eight or ten horses out there and three or four of them were unusable, but there are still five or six horses out there, beautiful horses; I never even went to get them. But that was sort of the story of the horses.

The undertaker in Miles City, I also knew him, believe it or not, but I did know him, and he shipped my father back to the home town and I drove back there for the funeral. And, so help me God, I never shed a tear until I started crawling into the city limits of my home town, and I shed a couple then.

Fred: You mentioned Martin Arthur, he's a fellow not too many people know

anything about. What can you tell us about Martin Arthur?

Luke: Well, Martin Arthur, I have a few little stories I can tell you about him. He was successful side show operator, his father was a doctor, and I understand a very fine doctor, never met him, he built a big successful carnival. He decided he wanted to get into the circus business. He sold off the carnival, put the circus on trucks--it was right in the middle of the war, you couldn't buy no equipment or trucks or anything--and my mother went over there and took the concessions and the pie car. As I mentioned before, she sold him Babe and two other elephants, Indy and Bunny, and he gathered up about four or five other elephants, he had seven or eight elephants on that show. Cheerful Gardner was the one who took over the elephants.

Frank Ellis went over there as the legal adjuster and a guy in Los Angeles, I can't recall his name, was general agent. Jim Wood was with the show. It wasn't too successful. They had a terrible time moving, so now, he's got no money--greatest promoter in the world, but he ain't got no money at all. He pulled that thing into Los Angeles and got up one morning and said, "We're gonna put it on rails next year." And he promoted a car dealer down on Figureoa for \$40,000-\$50,000, and he promoted Louis Goebels, who had all the money in the world, for I don't know how much. Louis helped him with the railroad cars and stuff. He promoted my mother, who come up with \$20,000, and he put the show out with this. It was a 15 car show, a pretty darn nice show. They were in competition with the Beatty show at the time and I wouldn't say

Beatty did it, but the people who worked for him used some tactics that I wouldn't call very good--they wrote churches letters and this and that, and told them a whole bunch of thieves were coming to town, and this, that, and the

other thing, and it really hurt their business.

They had agent trouble, and finally my mother got most of her money back, almost \$2,500. And Louis Goebels, he wound up with all the railroad cars, the wagons (you've got some of the wagons here) and the car dealer downtown, he got stuck. He didn't wind up with nothing, I don't think. Eventually, Martin Arthur give my mother either a Ferris Wheel or a Whip for \$2,500, so now he's out, he's got nothing, and how he ever got another carnival together I don't know, but he did; and it was a pretty nice carnival. He took that thing to the Hawaiian Islands and got it over there and two guys approached him, he was going to be there for like three weeks or four weeks, I don't know what now, but at the time Martin and I was pretty good friends, well, we always was, but we were fairly close at the time this was going on--but these guys wanted to buy this, they were from Chicago. So Martin called Chicago to find out if their check was good, they said it was good, so he sold it to them. Now, instead of Martin getting that check cashed immediately, he stalled around for a couple of days over in the Hawaiian Islands and he got on a plane, he called me up and I met him at the plane, he showed me the check for, I don't know now, \$60,000-\$70,000 maybe, and he stalled around Los Angeles there waving this check around in front of everybody, showing them what he got for his carnival.

Finally he gets on another plane and goes to Chicago and the check was no good. He comes back and flies to the Hawaiian Islands, now these guys have had this show for a couple of weeks, they got all the money it took in, and they just give it back to him. Now he's setting there with this show and broke, and ain't got enough money to get it back to the United States.

I understand Fernandez bought some of the rides and stuff, and he got back over here with one or two rides,

Arthur Bros. Circus big top and trucks in 1944. Pfening Archives.



something like that, and he had had a full-blown show. He never ever did really recover from that. He worked around carnivals and he had a couple of fun houses, he had one on one show and one he had. I think he lived comfortably the rest of his life, he had a nice home down in Tucson. I think I was talking to you the other day, and he's got Alzheimer's disease, if he's alive, and I don't know whether he is or not. Two years ago I called his wife and she said it was no use going out to see him.

Fred: What about Jimmy Wood?

Luke: He was the world's greatest promoter next to Floyd King. Only man I ever know who went to a Catholic church and borrowed \$2,500 to buy a Ferris Wheel with. Fair and square, he went to a Catholic church, and he wasn't even a Catholic, and borrowed \$2,500 to buy a Ferris Wheel. One day in Blythe, after I'd been out of show business ten years, I bought fish worms from a guy, he come into my store and had this sad look on his face. I looked at him and said, "Do you know, if I didn't know it was impossible, I'd swear to God that you'd been doing business with Jimmy Wood." He said, "Jimmy Wood, that's the guy I got a bad check from."

I worked on two or three movies for him; never got nothing. Nobody else did, nobody ever knew where the money went to, 'cause he got paid but he just flat wouldn't pay you. But the 101 Ranch, he put that out and it was a nice show. That was in 1946, the first year I was out; my first year out of the Army, and I made about \$28,000 over there and I thought I was the richest guy in town. I was. That was a lot of money back then. And he wallered that thing around all year, and he was always borrowing money from me, he could borrow more money from me than I could steal back from him; it was really something.

And then he put out the Yankee-Patterson Circus next year, and I had an elephant over there and I had concessions. He got into that and wasn't doing too bad. All of a sudden he got a contract to build the sets for a movie, and he had Hollywood on the brain, and he built sets for movies and didn't come around to the show and the show just went like this. So he owed everybody in the country and then he finally, of all people, he talked Louis Goebels into putting up the money for a whole stack of brand new GMC trucks, I don't know, 15-18 of them, to put underneath a carnival he was putting together and that Louis put up the money to do that, and I don't think Louis



Anderson's spool truck on King Bros. Circus in 1956. Fred Pfening photo.

ever got all that money back. I'm sure he didn't.

Now you asked me about Floyd King. Well, Floyd called me up in Los Angeles, called Jimmy Wood up about me. I'd been with Jimmy the year before, and I got on an airplane and flew back to Macon. I made a deal with him for concessions, it wasn't decided which show I'd be on, and the hippo show, and I give him \$10,000 to help him get open and I sold him my canvas truck for \$5,000, which I never got a nickel out of it, not five cents. Drove that sucker all the way from California to Macon.

Fred: Was that the one Wayne Sanguin had built for you?

Luke: Yeah, and I'll tell you more about that canvas truck. It's still around. It was on the Great American Circus. Anyway, so now I go back there and with me I took the man who had been the manager of the Clyde Beatty Circus, Al Moss, who I always thought was a very efficient manager, a very good man who for some reason or another never did seem to click. He did all right, but he never really did what he should have done; so he's gonna be the manager. And, of course, I'm going to be on the show Al's with, 'cause I'd been a friend of Al's for years and years. So, opening day in Macon, Georgia, they took the other show and it opened some

Howard King, brother and former partner of Floyd. Pfening Archives.



where else, 50 miles away. I never even seen the other show, I wasn't interested in that, I was interested in this one. So Al's trying to get this thing together, we've got nine or ten elephants and they set the show up right across the street from winter quarters on the fairgrounds. So the first day the matinee is three hours late, I went over to the big top and Al looked at me and shook his head and said, "It'll never make it." I said, "What do you mean, Al?" He said, "If they can't be on time the first day, when they've got all winter to get the damn thing ready, what are we going to do tomorrow when we've gotta move this thing 100 miles and have it ready to go at two o'clock?" Well, that was the truth. Things just got worse and worse and worse.

Fred: Was it just too big a show or was it management, or what was the problem?

Luke: Well, I just don't really know. Floyd was a terrific agent, everybody knows that, one of the best there ever was, but the thing--one thing--I don't think the show should have been trying to parade a truck show. I think those days were gone. I think my dad pretty well proved that with his show. We never figured that parade ever really made us any money. I mean he wanted to try it and did, and he got away with it. And things happened over there. Floyd absolutely couldn't run a show. He might have been the greatest agent in the world, but he couldn't manage one. He was the only man I'd ever seen who would actually steal from himself. He would sneak people under the sidewall and charge them half price to put them in the show. If he sent them around to the front end, they'd have to pay full price to get in. Really! And things went on around there, and I tried to stop some of it, 'cause I got ten grand in this thing, I want my ten grand and it's of interest to me to keep this thing going. His brother, Howard King, he had the back reserved seats. His wife had the front door and she's stealing everything she can get her hands on, (God love her) and Al comes to me one day--Al Moss is in charge of the ticket sellers there, besides, and he says, "Luke, we've really got a bad situation here. I'll tell you, Howard King won't let any of my ticket sellers sell tickets to go on the backside of the tent and he's stealing all that money over there." And I said, "All of it?" And he said, "All of it. I can't sell a ticket on the backside of the tent." We're talking about a big tent, I don't know, 130-140, something like that, ten high

grandstand over there, and we're not getting any money out of them. I went to Floyd and said, "Floyd, I don't like to tell you this, but I think your brother is stealing all the money on the backside." He says, "He is, son?" I said, "Yes, he is." He said, "Well, son, you go in there and fire the son-of-a-bitch." And I said, "I'm not going to do anything like that. We're talking about your brother. If you want him fired, you fire him, I'm not gonna fire your brother." And do you know, he never did a thing about it.

Howard would sleep at the best hotels in town, drive the best car, eat \$10 filet mignons, and his wife's got diamonds all over both her hands, built two big apartment buildings out in Los Angeles, and he'd steal everything he could get his hands on, and his wife, too. That's an absolute fact, unbelievable. That Floyd, nothing bothered him, absolutely nothing!

He runs out of money and says to me one day, "I want you to call Paul Van Pool up and see if you can borrow \$1,500." I said, "Floyd, I don't want to do that. You call him up." He said, "I know he'll tell me 'no,' but he's a friend of yours." So we went down to the hotel and rented a room and we went in and sat down and I called Paul up. Of course Floyd can't hear what Paul says to me; he says, "Why I wouldn't give that son-of-a-bitch five cents." So I turned around to Floyd and said, "Floyd, he says he won't give it to you." So Floyd says to me, "If you promise to make it good, he'll let you have it."

I said, "Wait a minute," and I laid the phone down and said, "How am I going to get it back?" And he said, "You've got the concessions, just take it out of concessions." And I said, "How are we going to pay him back?" He said, "You just take it out of concessions every day and send it back to him, until it's paid." So I talked to Paul and said, "He wants me to guarantee it, what about that?" He said, "If you'll guarantee it, he can have it, anything he wants if you'll guarantee it." And so it was only \$1,500. I had the \$1,500 in my pocket, but I figured if I give it to him, he already owes me ten grand, or part of ten grand anyway. So I said, "All right, Paul, send it to him, I'll guarantee it." So now the first week comes along and Floyd's got, I don't know, \$400-\$500 coming out of concessions, I'm supposed to take it over to the office. I don't take it over there, I go down to Western Union and send it to Paul. So Floyd comes over to

concessions and says, "Luke, you forgot to bring the money over for concessions." I said, "No, I didn't forget." He says, "Well, I need that money." I said, "Yeah, but we agreed on the telephone to a man that we would send him that money every week until that \$1,500 is paid." He said, "Well, we said that, but we didn't mean to do that." I said, "Well, maybe you didn't mean to do it, but I meant to do it." And so we went through with that for about three weeks until Paul got his money back, and I went through that every week with him. We had a big fight every week over this. I should have never agreed to this to start with, but I finally got Paul back his money before the show closed.

Let me tell a little about this canvas truck. The canvas truck, the big top catches on fire one day, going down the highway; I'm behind this thing, just accidentally. I didn't follow the canvas truck. I see this thing burning and I stop the truck and whatever idiot's driving it, I said, "Let's unspool that tent right in the middle of the road and save the truck," which we did. And we drove off and left the tent in the middle of the road. I don't know why we didn't get a complaint out of that, but we never did. And it burnt the tent up; I think it was 140 with three 40s. It was a big tent, a double row of quarter poles. So now I get to town. I go on around this canvas truck, it was runnable; and what it was was those original Sanquin loaders were all metal but the sides were wood, and it just burnt the sides out of it.

So I get to town and Floyd's standing on the corner of the lot and I said, "Floyd, I've got a little bad news for you. We've got a little problem, kinda serious." He said, "What's that, son?" I said, "Your big tent just burned up out on the highway." He never even batted his eye, he said, "Son, you know we've been having trouble putting that big tent up anyway, over there's No. 80, (I didn't even know this) and an 80 with three 40s in there. You have them get

that out and put it up. We'll just go on—been having trouble putting that big tent up anyway, over there's No. 80, (I didn't even know this) and an 80 with three 40s in there. You have them get that out and put it up. We'll just go on like nothing's happened."

So he starts off and I said, "Oops, hold it, Floyd. We've got a ten high grandstand; there's no way can we put a ten high grandstand down both sides with an 80 and three 40s." He said, "Son, I've got to go up and talk to these agents, you figure out something and do the best you can." And he drove off.

So I got an electric Skilsaw and we sawed all those seats in two—it ain't no ten high no more, it's five high now, and we put this thing up. Floyd don't show up until about the time the show starts and me and Al got this thing up. He said, "Well, it looks like you done a pretty good job, son." He walked into the tent and said, "My God, what did you do to my seats?" I said, "I sawed them in two." He said, "I may get me another big tent some day and now I've got no seats to put in it." I said, "There's no way we could put them in here and you told me to do the best I could, so that's what I did."

Well, we got over that little hobnob, then one morning Frances and I, the show moved pretty early, we woke up and the show was gone; but there's an elephant standing over there. I said to Frances, "They forgot an elephant." But there's nothing I can do about it, so I just hooked up and got out of there and went to the next town, 70-80 miles away. Got in and went over to Floyd and said, "Floyd, they forgot to count the elephants; we left an elephant on the other lot."

"Well," he said, "What do you think we ought to do about, son?" I said, "Well, I think we ought to get one of them trucks and go back and get the elephant." "No," he says, "Let's don't do that." I said, "Well, what are you going to do?" He said, "I'm going to tell you what's going to happen." And it happened exactly the way he said it

was going to happen. "Some neighbor is going to get up and see that elephant and they ain't going to know what to do; so they're going to call the sheriff up and he's going to come out and look at the elephant and he ain't going to know what to do; and he's going to call the zoo over in Atlanta, which was about 60 miles away, and they'll all talk this thing over, and we're gone and they probably don't know where we're at, they'll finally

Anderson's hippo show on King Bros. Western unit in 1956. Fred Pfening Photo.



send a truck over from Atlanta and they'll pick that elephant up and they'll take him back to the zoo. Then when we come back through here next fall, we'll pick the elephant up." You know, it happened just exactly the way he said it.

Now there's a guy that owns a GMC agency, I believe it's GMC, in Macon that let's him have some trucks, 'cause he needed more trucks, we're putting out two shows. He let Floyd have about fifteen trucks, no money. He talked him out of it, just like Jimmy Wood, I don't know how he did it. So we get up in Pennsylvania with this thing and this guy shows up; he's supposed to get something every week, he ain't never got nothing, and so Floyd sends him to me. The guy said, "I'm having a problem, I can't find any of my trucks." And I said, "Let's go get ahold of the master of transportation and find out about your trucks." So we get ahold of the guy, this guy would describe one truck to him and he'd say, "Well, that truck is over in Ohio, the rear end's out of that, so we left that one there. And this one is over in Kentucky, we left that one in this town. This guy had brought fifteen drivers with him from Macon, Georgia to repossess these trucks and there wasn't one truck there; they were all gone. And that Floyd had gone and promoted another truck dealer somewhere to replace all those trucks, no money. We had this show, we opened in Macon, Georgia, we closed in . . . well, I can't tell you the town, it's up around Hartford, Connecticut; and we moved that show from Macon, Georgia to Hartford without a license tag on it. Not a single license plate on that show! And the Highway Patrol used to line that thing up and Floyd would come out there and say, "Well, we just don't have any money to buy them." And the guy said, "Well, we're just going to take this over." And Floyd would say, "Well, that will just be a relief off my mind, we've got all these animals to feed, they've had nothing to eat. Are you guys going to get something to eat to feed these elephants, and this and that? And there's 200 people here that ain't had nothing to eat, don't forget that." And these guys would finally say, "Get this thing out of here," and down the road we'd go with it. And that's the way that show moved.

Now, somewhere along the line, some oil company semi went through a stop sign and hit my canvas truck. Now we've got more damage to the



The Anderson hippo show on Jack Moore's Carson & Barnes Circus in 1958. Pfening Archives.

canvas truck, it's bent in on one side and whatever. Of course it isn't really my truck; I had the title to it, I never give the title up. So there was some idiot riding in this truck. I'll tell you what kind of an idiot he was, he was on paregoric and Coca Cola. I don't know what kind of a high you can get with that, but he actually went to town in the mornings and go to the Police Station, get hold of the Chief of Police and tell him he was with this circus and apparently you had to have a prescription to get this paregoric, and he'd tell the Chief he had these sick monkeys out there and he just had to have this paregoric, and damn if he wouldn't promote this through the Chief of Police. He'd been doing this a long time, and nobody knows he's been doing it and, finally, one of these Chiefs was out on the lot one day and got to talking to Floyd and said, "How's those sick monkeys?" And Floyd said, "What sick monkeys?"

Of course it's in the fire then, and they put this guy in jail. This was about three days after the truck wreck and he is in the truck; he don't get hurt. They kept him in jail about six or eight weeks. And when the show closed, I just took the truck; I had the title for it, I didn't ask nobody for it or anything. I put a driver in it and sent it to Wayne Sanguin in Hugo, OK and called Wayne on the phone and said, "Rebuild that truck, fix it up, put new sides on it and set it there; and what will it cost?" I don't think I asked about the cost right then because he hadn't seen the truck. But I called him, put the guy in the truck, and away it went.

The show is closed, so I went over on some big carnival with my hippo show. I was there about two weeks; that didn't work out at all. That thing was no good on a carnival. I didn't like carnivals, anyway. So I went over with Jack Mills, and I was over there about two or three weeks. And that's when they called me

up to Carson & Barnes, and I had my concession equipment in Los Angeles and I had it shipped to Carson & Barnes and I took the hippo over there, and I was over there for three years. I got along real well with them--but that King show!

Then later on, somebody threatened to sue me over this canvas truck. They called me long distance on the phone one night in California and I said, "Just

have at it." He said, "That's our truck." I said, "Then why don't you have the title for it? I've got the title right here in my desk." So I never heard no more for that; then about a month later I get a call from a lawyer in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He said, "Did you own so-and-so truck?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "Was it in a wreck with an oil company truck?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "Well, we got a fellow in here who was in jail, he got out of jail and he's suing them." He's this guy on this paregoric I talked about, and he's suing them. The lawyer said, "I thought as long as I was at it, I'd sue them for you, too, and get the price of fixing the truck."

How much would it cost to fix the truck?" I said, "About \$2,500." And so he said, "You give me 25% and I will collect that for you." Well, that was fine with me, nothing in writing or anything like that. I had already had the truck rebuilt, \$1,700 was what he charged to rebuild it. About a month later I got a check for \$1,900 from this lawyer.

When I got off of the show, I think Floyd King owed me \$200-\$300, and Arnold Maley owed me \$150, a personal loan, 'cause he didn't have enough money to get back to Macon on. I give Al Moss money to get back to California, and that was it.

Fred: What can you tell me about Wayne Sanguin? You know we hear his name in regard to spool trucks and that, but what do you know about him?

Luke: He's a welder and been retired for many, many years, owns a ranch in Hugo and raises thoroughbred cattle.

Fred: So he's still alive today?

Luke: Yeah. One of the fellows that worked for him, I always go by and see. I can't think of his name, but the original Kelly-Miller show, his shop built everything that Kelly-Miller ever had. And this loader was Does' brother's idea. Now he's fell right into it and has a son-in-law that's a super builder.

Fred: So Wayne had a fabricating shop?

Luke: He had this little shop there and here come this Kelly-Miller show and they started building all those big semis they had, and everything was built there in his shop. He did all their work and he charged them plenty. Kelly was kind of a partner in it and he [Sanguin] made enough money to retire and go into the pure-bred cattle business, which he did. He's a very nice fellow. I haven't seen Wayne in years, I've been in Hugo, but I haven't seen him.

Fred: I think the first one Wayne made supposedly ended up, I think, going to Bill Griffith up here, and that's now stored down below in one of the museum buildings. Now the one that you had made, you said that's now on Allan Hill's Great American Circus? Is that the loader mechanism on a new truck chassis?

Luke: Yeah, that's a new truck chassis; probably four or five trucks under that loader. It's got written right on the side of it the year, the month, that is stenciled right in there. And I had some doubts whether it was mine or not, and the guy that's the manager over there this year is the one that told me it was mine. Yeah, Jim Roller, he verified it, and someone else over there, a family that worked for me and I can't think of their name, he's the first one that told me.

He sand blasted it when he first got it and he discovered this thing on the side that it was built in 1951, the winter of 1950-1951. There's some little discrepancy whether that's the loader or not. It says this thing was built . . . I'm gonna straighten that out. I'm going down to Hugo and find out from that boy that worked in that shop, he's still in that shop, and he would know. But it says that thing was built, I think, in May and we opened in April and had that loader on the show in April. So, I'm going to have to ask him if they built more than one loader that spring. If they didn't build more than one that spring, that's it. But if they built two.

Fred: How did it get from Wallace & Clarke to Hoxie and to Great American?

Luke: Well, I sold it to Jack Moore on the Carson & Barnes show. He had an old one and it went there, and when Does took the show over, it was there. Now I'm asking Does and them guys what happened to that loader that they got when they got the show, and I'll be damned, they don't know.

Fred: Maybe they sold some second hand equipment to Hoxie Tucker.

Luke: I think it went to Hoxie Tucker somewhere, but I don't know that for sure. It seems to me that's where Allan told me he got it.

Fred: When he bought Hoxie's Great American. You talked a good bit about your hippo show and how successful it was. Can you describe the physical layout, how you operated it, and what the features were?

Luke: Well, this thing was about 26 feet long.

Fred: This is the tractor-trailer?

Luke: Well, no, the trailer was 26 feet long, and the tractor would make it about 35 feet long. Then it had this deal where it opened out and you walked all the way around this thing. I could put about 125 people on the thing at one time. It apparently was built very good, 'cause it never did fall down.

Fred: Was this a platform around that it.

Luke: It was a platform, but down the sides it had steel steps that went up to the platform. I used to make a pitch out front, just like you'd put on a side show. And I had a little baby leopard that I used to lay across the front of the ticket box in front of me that kind of got the people excited. I didn't go as far as Joe Lewis went; you heard about what Joe Lewis told people about the gorilla? Oh my God, it was absolutely unbelievable what he told people about that. The first thing, it wasn't a gorilla, it was a chimpanzee, a little black faced chimpanzee. He told them about how this lady, Mrs. Carter, had got this animal as a little baby and raised this animal, and this gorilla turned on her and killed her.

He had some big blow up pictures of Jean Harlow's funeral, but there's no name on it, and he said this was the people who came to Mrs. Carter's funeral. So he's got the big blow up picture of poor Mrs. Carter that the gorilla turned

The Anderson canvas spool truck on Hoxie Bros. Circus in 1973. Charles De-wein photo.



on and killed, and says that this gorilla was sentenced to live the rest of his life in this cage. And, you know, people just eat that thing up. And he was on the Kelly-Miller show and I used to watch him and said, boy, if you got the right story.

So I got this hippo and I went. After I had decided to do this, I started reading all the information I could about hippos, about the things they can do. And it's true that crocodiles are afraid of these things, and it is true that they can move pretty damn fast on land, and also can move pretty fast in the water. Of course, I exaggerated all this stuff a little bit. He weighed about three ton, and I told them he weighed four ton.

Fred: Was this a male or female?

Luke: Big old male hippo.

Fred: Where did you get him?

Luke: I got him from Henry Treflich. Where was I reading just a while back that that hippo come off, I believe, the Hagenback show or something, or the Floto show.

Fred: It wasn't named Victor, was it?

Luke: Well, I don't know, because they never told me where this thing come from. I wasn't really interested in it. And I got so much money with this thing and I was on the Beatty show and they run me off and went and got one of their own. They never did get no money with it. Jack Moore, he didn't want me back with Carson & Barnes; he built one and never could get any money with it. In fact, I went and visited the show one day and he wanted me to get up and make an opening on his hippo show and I wouldn't do it.

I used to have a story I'd tell. Jack Moore used to get the biggest kick out of it, and I'd be telling him all this stuff, and I'd usually do this at the afternoon pitch. And I'd say, "Ladies and Gentlemen, I was downtown in your fair city today and I went in a bar to get a drink of sassafrilla, I was thirsty, and there was a fellow in that bar that

was talking so loud that nobody else could say anything. He would say, "I want to buy a drink for everybody in the house," and, you know, I just seen that fellow walk by here a minute ago and he had two little kids, one in each hand, and one little kid looked up and said, "Daddy, I want to see the hippopotamus." and he said to that little kid, "We can't afford that." Jack always used to get the biggest kick out of that. Fred: So all you had was a ticket booth set up,

a truck with a fold down walk platform.

Luke: I had two sets of steps and I had the ticket box right in the middle, and the people went up one side and down the other.

Fred: So you'd have to get up on the platform in order to see in the truck and see the hippo?

Luke: Yeah. You couldn't see it without getting up.

Fred: And you had one big long tank in there?

Luke: No, it was half tank and half platform. The tank was about 12 foot long and the platform was probably about 14 foot long.

Fred: Where did you get the truck from, or who did you have build it for you?

Luke: I don't recall. I'll send you a picture of it.

Fred: I know I've seen pictures of it, probably Carson & Barnes. What about George Emerson?

Luke: Well, George Emerson was a very very nice man. He did lots and lots of favors for me, and he never got paid back. Well, I did quite a little movie work out there with elephants and stuff. I had Dolly Jacobs' elephants, Modoc, Empress and Judy, Babe and Shirley and another one on a picture out there. George had been over in Italy on a picture, *Quo Vadis*, and he just got back, he come out and I already had the deal set, four elephants again, and he come out and helped us all through the picture; never took anything for it or anything else. If I needed animals or anything, George would always dig them up, dig up a place for them to buy meat for the lions. He'd do everything.

And then that Frank Witbeck, he was around one of the big shows, I don't know which one, but he was in charge of all advertising all over the world for Metro Goldwyn Mayer, and I got to see him every Wednesday when we had a luncheon down there across from the depot. George would go down and I would go down, all the show-folks. And we had 30-40 people down there every week, once a week.

Fred: Where was this at?

Luke: Los Angeles. Across from the depot.

Fred: There was a restaurant there, or something? (Yes) What was the name of it?

Luke: I'm trying to think of the name of it, it's still there. (Transcriber's comment: Phillippe's Restaurant)

Fred: One thing that's been talked to us here a little bit, and you've even done yourself, is to "angel" a show, either to get it going or to keep it going. You know, to be a silent partner.



The midway of Anderson's Wallace & Clark Circus in 1953.

Luke: Well, that's a sad affair the way the show people treat those people the way they do. But Floyd was famous for that. He got that [Harold] Rumbaugh, and he's a man that came from Bellingham, Washington and owned a big department store there, and he come up with all the money, I guess, to put the King show out originally, that they bought from Dad. Rumbaugh come in there and bought that stuff, put up the money to buy it, and then they just had no mercy on those guys. Ted DeWayne, his father-in-law had never been on a circus in his life, he put up the money to build DeWayne Bros., all new equipment and everything. And, of course, that went the way most circuses go that are run by actors.

I have a theory about actors--the reason, not actors, now, 'cause there's some actors that did very well running circuses, but most of the time, the most important thing on an actor's mind when he builds a circus is the performance. That's number one. And that's the wrong place to start if you're going to have a circus. In the first place you start with a circus is the advance.

That's number one. Number two is to move it and get it in, 'cause if you don't get it in and get it up, it ain't gonna matter what you got in there. And the last thing you worry about is the actors. Now if you tell an actor that, they'll get mad. That is the way it's gotta be done if you want to be successful in the circus business. You've gotta do most of your worrying about the important things. I don't care if you bring big Ringling Bros. to town, if nobody knows it's there, it ain't gonna do you no good. Does that make sense?

Fred: Absolutely. Spoken like a true business man. What about sponsors? The whole complexion of the business is changed today.

Luke: I don't know nothing; this all

happened . . . we had a few sponsors on my show, not many. We opened in Hot Springs, Arkansas and we had the Elks Lodge there sponsor this. Then we jumped out of there and made a date for the Shrine, and two or three dates for the year, that's about all there was to it. We just sold the thing on its own merits, and that's the way I'd like to see it done all the time. I think all businesses should stand upon its own merits; but apparently in this day and age, you can't make money standing on your own merits.

Fred: You mentioned Jimmy Cole as being one of the finest gentlemen you'd ever worked with. Tell us a little about him.

Luke: I had never met Jimmy Cole. My dad had been over on his show one year as I mentioned, with a liberty act sometime during the war years, but I went over there and had concessions and, apparently, Jimmy had never really seen an operation with concessions like we had. Vonderheid, the guy that had the concessions the year before I did, certainly hadn't, 'cause he trailed the show the first two weeks they was out because he didn't think I was going to be able to make it. I give them a flat rate of, I think, \$400 a week, and he didn't think I was going to be able to pay them, so he trailed the show with his semi and concessions. I didn't know the guy. I said to somebody, "Who's that guy that's parked down on the front of the lot every day with that big semi?" They said, "Well, that's Mr. Vonderheid that had the concessions here last year." I said, "Well, what is he doing?" And he says, "He's waiting for you to not be able to pay and then he's gonna come over and take concessions over." Well, he got fooled; I was there all season and had a big year, paid Jimmy \$400 a week; and he paid about \$200 a week and had a struggle to pay, so he didn't know too much about concessions.

Fred: Why don't you tell us a little



about the concessions business and how to do it successfully.

Luke: Well, it's no great big secret about the thing. You gotta try to get money on a day there's no people in there, you can't just . . . well, like a lot of guys around some shows, if there's only fifty people sitting in there, all the concession guys are sitting down somewhere; they're not in there trying to sell them anything. They want people to take the stuff away from them, and all those little nickels and dimes and stuff, you know, count.

Fred: So you'd say the secret is to make sure the pitch men are out in front?

Luke: I don't think there's anything to it. And you can't have your help stealing all your money from you. Novelties are a big thing around shows. I was fortunate, I had a man off the Al G. Barnes show. Mr. Johnson was with me for years, and he took care of the novelties for me. He was with Jimmy Cole and King Bros., everywhere else I was, he was with me, and I could trust him. I didn't have to stand around over the top of him to see whether he was running stock in on me or something like that. There was a lot of money involved, there's a lot of money in all this today.

Fred: One last person to ask about--Gene Holter.

Luke: A very nice man, always did what he said. . . . well, almost always did what he said he would do. The first year I let him have Babe, he had her about four months before he ever paid me anything. I guess he couldn't, he paid me all at once. But he had that elephant about, I don't know, I'd have to do some figuring, but six or seven years he leased that elephant from me before he bought her. I finally sold her to Gene. Kind of an inside thing. I

Bill Wilcox and Sam Price posting a big daub for Wallace & Clark in 1953. Pfening Archives.

went up to Gene's house one day, knocked on the door and a guy come to the door that I don't know, and I said I had come to see Gene. He said that they had just buried him. I said, "What?" He said, "I just come from the funeral."

Fred: That would have been what, in the early 1960s?

Luke: Oh, in the 1960s or 1970s. Just for no reason at all I had stopped to see the guy, I hadn't seen in two or three years, had no reason to go by and see him. His wife was a nice lady.

Fred: Luke, why don't you tell us your memory of how they presented Tusko the elephant on the Al G. Barnes Circus and about when that occurred.

Luke: Well, I don't believe I can tell you exactly when that occurred because I was a small boy and my father took me to the show, and I was very impressed by three things on the show. One of them was Mr. Barnes riding in behind the hippopotamus on the track in a little buggy, the other was the Wild Man of Borneo they presented in a pit show; and when they presented Tusko in the circus tent in the middle of the show, they brought twelve horses, hooked in fours, in ahead of Tusko, with chains to Tusko and four of these horses would go to the right, four would go to the left, and four would go to the front. Then they had four more that was trailing him, and they all had chains on him, and when they introduced him as being the world's most vicious elephant, why all these teams would tighten these chains up--and there must have been a ton of chains, they went over his back, down his trunk, over his tusks so his trunk couldn't get above his tusks, and,

of course, most all this was show, but it was a very impressive thing to a little boy. And I was a little boy.

Fred: Do you remember anything about the people that were around Tusko? Were there a number of people around or was it primarily an animal demonstration?

Luke: Well, the fellow that was in charge of Tusko at the time was Joe Metcalf, and his wife, she worked in the show. I don't know many people that was there. Mark Smith was one of the main horse trainers, George Emerson's wife was on the show; Shreveport Ethreage was working on elephants at the time, and the Cristiani family was on the show doing their riding act. And that is about all I remember about the personnel on that show.

Fred: Did seeing other circuses, other than your father's, have any influence on you as a showman?

Luke: Well, I've always said that I've learned more about the circus business from circuses that went broke than I ever did from circuses that were a success. 'Cause anything that's a success seems to kind of run on its own, there don't seem to be any effort. But one that goes broke, something went wrong, and if you find out all those things that went wrong and you start to run a circus, if you can eliminate those things you've got a successful circus.

Fred: Why don't you tell us a little about the lesser pandas that you tried to import.

Luke: Well, these pandas were actually given to my father by an animal dealer in Burma. My father bought three baby elephants, and he sent four baby elephants and he sent these two lesser panda to my father as a present. One of these pandas died on the boat on the way over and the other one died about two weeks before the show opened. Now there was one of the baby elephants that also died on the boat, and another one of the baby elephants died, and there seems to be some controversy whether she died before the show opened or after the show opened. I've always maintained she died before the show opened, but I actually couldn't prove that. So we only wound up with two baby elephants, one was named India and the other one's name was Bunny. And later on, when my father and mother got a divorce, why I took those two elephants to the Kelly-Miller show and they was over there while I was in the Army, then they went to the Arthur show. And where they went from there, I don't really know.

Fred: A lot of talk about circuses al-

ways focuses on the catastrophies, problems, and all that. How about giving us a few memories of the really nice things, the nice people that you've been exposed to in your show business career.

Luke: Well, of course, the nicest thing about a circus is when it's full of people, that's the most enjoyable thing that can happen to you. You walk into that tent and they're sitting on the ground. But we made many friends in the business, also made some enemies. But my father was well liked everywhere we went. Ordinarily we'd go back to every place we'd ever been before. There were a few exceptions to that. But the biggest catastrophe we ever had was when my father was killed in a truck accident, when him and his horses were killed in Miles City, Montana in 1950.

Fred: What about some of the real nice people you met? I think earlier you talked about Bill Woodcock, and maybe you want to say a little bit more about him, or some of the other good people you met.

Luke: Well, Woodcock was a very close friend of mine, and the friendship started when I was about 12-14 years old. My father bought his first elephant from Mr. Hall, an elephant named Ena. Woodcock worked for Mr. Hall at that time. Also a fellow by the name of Spencer Huntley, and a number of other people there: Black, Bolo Maxi, High Pockets, and a fellow name of Welsh, who later took the elephants on the Russell Bros. Circus, and then eventually wound up with the Ringling show. But, personally, I'm pretty much a friend of everybody in show business; I don't have very many people that I dislike. I try to eliminate disliking people.

Fred: Luke, you've had a long career in the business and probably one of the things you really excelled at was concession operations. Can you tell us a little bit about things that really make a concession operation a success, as opposed to being a so-so operation?

Luke: Well, probably the most important thing is corraling the money.

Fred: That's like saying you rob a bank because that's where the money's at.

Luke: I think concessions are really not that hard to run. I think you gotta have the people who work for you really do it. Good novelty men, good seat butchers, and good equipment to work with is very important in the concessions business, too. I found that lots of circuses, maybe not so much now as they were years ago, would spend all their money fixing up the circus, but they'd never spend no money fixing up



Norman "Luke" Anderson, circus owner, concession man and hippopotamus enthusiast, in 1953.

the concessions. Of course I think this was a very big mistake, concessions are a big earning department on the circus.

Fred: One of the big things there's always been a question about motorized circuses is just keeping the show running; all the difficulties of over the road travel, trouble with trucks, drivers, things like that. Would you like to make any comments about that?

Luke: Well, probably the smoothest running circus I've ever seen is today's Carson & Barnes. But they do put in a lot of effort over there. They have a school in the winter time to teach their drivers. The drivers have to go to this school one or two days a week for a month or two before the show opens. I think this is great, and their drivers are all licensed drivers, and they've got the most terrific mechanical department I've ever seen. They carry three or four extra tractors that don't even go under a semi. In case something goes wrong, they just back another one under; and they have a wrecker and they put the broken down one behind the wrecker and go right on. It's a show that practically never misses a day. My father had that kind of show, too, but it wasn't as great as the Carson & Barnes show. You have to have good, first rate mechanics, you've got to pay them first rate salaries to keep that show moving.

Fred: How about if we open up what kind of remarks or what kind of mem-

ories would you like to make sure are remembered for posterity. What things you heard about, saw, observed, or did in your show business career.

Luke: Well, I'm kind of up the river without a paddle there. I wouldn't know where to start with something like that. There's so many things I've seen happen around shows.

Fred: How about relations between shows and local people. You made the remark you had good relations between your shows and the local people, and your dad's shows, and you're always welcome back. What are some of the things you do that just kind of makes it that way?

Luke: Well, to start with, I give them a good show, and try to do business on an above board deal with them, be honest with them, and I think shows are far above today what they were fifty years ago on that. I think fifty years ago why show people didn't go out of the way to be particularly nice to people. There was always some show people that did, but today I go around these shows and the show people really go out of their way to help people, and I think it's great. I think the business, in some ways, is better today and, in some ways is a lot worse. The reason it's a lot worse is because it costs so much to hire people that they can't have as many people as they used to have.

Fred: What about the front end of a show? How does it vary from one part of a state, or from state to state, using different materials for the front end, and things like that?

Luke: Well, a show today really has big problems going from state to state, because a lot of states require a separate license tag for their particular state. They have separate electrical codes. You can move from one state to another and have to completely change everything on the show electrical to make the electrical laws. The health department rules are different in every state. And it really does make it very difficult, and I know it costs Carson & Barnes a lot of money when they go into states like Oregon and Washington, even Minnesota and Wisconsin. The laws are different in all those states and they have to comply and tear up electrical equipment they just built to satisfy one state, and they won't accept it at all in another state. That is a big problem today, and a show that doesn't have any money and is not successful, they have a terrible time complying with all those laws.

Fred: Whenever your epitaph is written, how would you like to be remembered as a showman?

Luke: "On time."

The Great Yacht Race on Beautiful Sarasota Bay.

Years ago folks came to Sarasota, Florida to "spend a summer during the winter" and that was the location of a very interesting yacht race that was held on Sarasota bay.

John and Mabel Ringling's fleet of boats included their luxurious house boat *Zolophus*, 125 feet in length, over all, 25 feet beam or the extreme width of the yacht, drawing 5 feet of water. I have no idea of her speed. They also owned a sixty foot cruiser *Zolophus Junior*.

Charles and Edith Ringling's fleet included their palatial yacht *Symphonia* which was 120 feet in length, over all, 20 feet beam or the extreme width of the yacht, drawing 4 feet, 6 inches of water. It cruised at eleven nautical miles an hour. It docked at the pier in front of their home. They also owned a 60 feet cruiser. Son Robert also docked his speed boat the *Viriling III* at home. The speed boat had a Dodge Gold Medal engine. During the winter the Dodge Motor Company would send a man to maintain the racing boat.

The houseboat *Zolophus* and *Zolophus Junior* were docked at the old Yacht and Automobile Club house on Gulf Stream Avenue. John Ringling later converted the building into the sunset apartments. The *Symphonia* always docked at the city pier, the yachts were docked about 300 feet apart.

One afternoon toward the end of the 1920 circus season Ollie Webb called me to his office tent and out of a clear sky asked if I would like to spend the coming winter in Sarasota. This was before the circus had pulled up stakes in Bridgeport, Connecticut and moved lock, stock and barrel to Sarasota. Being curious I asked what the job was and would I be able to handle the work. He told me that it was on Charles Ringling's yacht that was being built in New York. I was frank and told him the yacht was out of my territory. He said the Ringlings were real nice folks and that they wanted one or two men from the circus as part of the crew. Well, I told him all I could do was my best and accepted the job sight unseen, as Ollie could not tell what the job entailed.

The Ringling-Barnum Circus closed in Richmond, Virginia on the 27th of October. On the run to winter quarters in Bridgeport I worked in the pie car for Joe Dan Miller. Soon after arriving Mr. Webb handed me a chair car ticket

THE CIRCUS STEWARD

PART VII

BY JOHN M. STALEY

to New York City. He gave me instructions how to reach the shipyards as well as a note to the Captain.

Captain Hawkins was a weatherly Floridian. One glance and you knew that he was a man of the waters. He was very cordial and welcomed me aboard. He had all of his crew come and shake hands with me. Captain Hawkins was from Sneads Island, a dot on the enlarged map of Florida, just west of Palmetto on Terra Ceia Bay.

Most of his crew were from around Terra Ceia, Pametto and Samoset. During the first week in the shipyards Amos Sperling joined our crew. I had known Amos for years on the circus. He was in the program department. The Captain said he was going to be my messman.

John and Charles Ringling each had their yachts built, outfitted and put into commission during the late fall in the Consolidated Shipyards in Washington Heights, Bronx, New York.

John Ringling's yacht preceded Charles' by about six weeks in leaving New York City and had been docked in Sarasota better than a month when our yacht arrived in the sleepy town of Sarasota on New Year's Eve. We anchored out in the Gulf of Mexico until day break. On New Year's Day we hauled in the sea anchor and entered Sarasota Bay. The captain did not try to dock, instead he anchored between the end of city pier and Sunset Park which is now Golden Gate Point. The sailors lowered one of the smaller outboards and the Captain, chief engineer and I went ashore.

Standing under the old city hall arch

Charles and Edith Ringling's yacht *Symphonia*, used from 1921 to about 1926. Pfening Archives.

you could have shot off a cannon and not hit one living person as nary a soul did we meet from the city pier to the famous old Sarasota house at Five Points, which is now the Palmer Bank building. The Captain went into the lobby and called Mr. Charles

to let him know the yacht had finally arrived safe and sound. After the phone call I told the Captain I was going to shop around and line up my meat, milk and grocer man. I would pick up the mail when the post office opened. I had brought along an old belt to tie all the mail for the yacht. It had taken almost an entire month to bring the yacht down from New York City. When I asked for the mail for yacht *Symphonia*, after a glance in the "s" slot I was told there was not one letter from all the girls the crew had been seeing in New York while awaiting the yacht to be turned over to the Captain.

The *Symphonia* had a crew of nine men, consisting of the captain, chief engineer, second engineer, first mate, two sailors, steward, cook and messman. Whenever a large group of guests was coming aboard Mrs. Charles would send down the maid to help me. So help me, just when I needed some help the darn maid would get sea sick, even when the yacht was tied at the pier and a row boat would pass.

Below deck from the bow or the forecastle were the sailors and messman quarters including a large bathroom. Then the stateroom of the steward and cook, stateroom of the two engineers, then the Captain's stateroom. Next, going aft, was the mess room, then the galley and the large engine room.

In the owner's quarters were three double staterooms, one small stateroom for the maid or to be used at times for a single person. Then came the master stateroom. It was large and covered the entire stern. On the main deck from the bow was first the large living and music room. Then the cozy dining room that sat ten people. Then



the huge "dummy" smoke stack that was used by the engineers to enter or leave the engine room. There were no stairs. They had to use the steel hanging ladder.

A sixteen foot inboard launch was on the port side. It was used for the guests and owners. The recreation spot on the aft deck had wicker tables and chairs to match. On the boat deck from the bow was a large pilot house. On the aft deck were two row boats and a twelve foot outboard motor boat.

It has taken me a long round about way to relate the story of the great yacht race, but I am sure some of you nice folks sort of enjoyed these footnotes about one of the largest yachts on the west coast of Florida.

This one day, in early afternoon, the date does not matter, it was in the early twenties, we had just finished lunch and the crew was lounging on the city pier. It was warm winter day, not a breath of air. The sky was clear and blue. The clouds seemed like circus cotton candy floating along.

Suddenly out of nowhere the Ringling Pierce-Arrow with George, the chauffeur, behind the wheel pulled up to the gang plank and stopped. Seeing Mrs. Charles sitting in the back of the car I went over opened the door and helped her alight. First she told George to lock the car and come aboard, which he had done on different occasions. Then turning to me she said to tell the Captain she would like to take a ride up the bay around Anna Maria Island and return to the pier. She said she was not in any hurry and there was no need to break any speed limits.

After Mrs. Ringling came aboard I went below to give him the information. He was in his stateroom. Coming on deck he looked aft and Mrs. Ringling had already started knitting, the yarn laying on the mat rug. As I started toward the galley the chief engineer was disappearing down the ladder into the engine room. The mate and his sailors were busy getting all the lines in order to shove off. The Captain was scaling the outside ladder to the pilot house.

Reaching the galley I put together a large fruit bowl, mostly red delicious apples, and a cracker basket of saltines. Mrs. Ringling always wanted those two items on hand either on the aft deck or on the table in the dining room for the guests or themselves. She had mentioned when I first went to work that apples and crackers were the best antidote for sea sickness.

Here is a general run down of my position. As steward I had the cook and



Jenny Rooney and Edith Ringling in 1933. Pfening Archives.

messman under my jurisdiction. All orders sent to the yacht by George the chauffeur were given to me and then I gave the message to the Captain. If either Mr. or Mrs. Ringling were driven to the yacht or telephoned it was the same process. All foods or material to be purchased like gasoline, oil, water ice, laundry, dry cleaning were all okayed by the steward. At the end of each month Mr. Ringling would bring his commercial check book to the yacht. We would go over each bill and he would write checks to the merchants. He would also write the payroll checks for the crew. He then gave me the checks to give out.

His system was most different from his brother John's. Mr. John had a private secretary to do all his work. As I think back when I first came to Sarasota in 1920 I was asked by more than one merchant which of the Ringlings was I working for. When they were told Charles, they never asked any more questions. I found out later that Mr. John was a slow payer and not prompt as was his brother Charles. When there were no guests or owners aboard I was on my own. The only time I did any work while I was on the deck, except my own, was to handle a canvas covered bumper whenever it was needed to fend off the yacht from running against the concrete pier or any other place we docked.

The cook made up the meals for the crew and owners when aboard. It was my job to plan all the meals served on the yacht. The only exception was to call the Ringling home when a trip was planned to get all the dope on how many were in the party, about how long a trip, to where and when and if they wanted any certain kinds of meat.

The messman served the crew in the

mess room, helped the cook and had charge of taking care of the crews' quarters and officers staterooms. As steward I had the entire yacht to roam, The starboard side on the main deck and the pilot house were out of bounds to the crew, except in line of duty.

The Charles Ringlings were real home folks and never at any time did either of them put on airs. They were more like the folks next door.

Back to race day, it did not take long to cast off after the engineers had warmed up the twin engines. The Captain eased the yacht into the channel and you could hardly feel the vibration of the engines. They were purring so slowly, guiding through the old wooden causeway which started on the side of what is now Golden Gate Point.

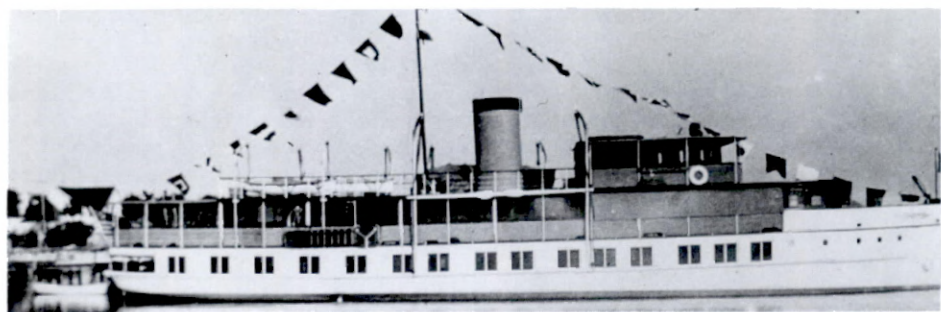
Sarasota Bay is very shallow in places, especially between the causeway and the Cortez Bridge. The distance between the two bridges is about 13.7 statute miles. It seemed like hours before we passed through the Cortez Bridge and into Sarasota Pass which empties into Tampa Bay.

Lo and behold John Ringling's houseboat *Zolophus* was coming down Tampa Bay on its way to home base in Sarasota. As the yachts passed off Anna Maria Island they gave greetings by tooting their whistle.

The Captain decided to turn the *Symphonia* around off Palma Sola Point in what the Captain called a "commodores" landing. He made a wide circle with the yacht which took all the space in the pass. At that point it was the widest. The channel at that spot was around ten feet deep. Out of the channel the water was shallow on both sides. In some places it was only four to six feet deep. The yacht needed four feet, six inches of water, so the Captain tried not to use too much propeller in turning. That way he could skim over the shallow water spots without being grounded. By the time we were back again in the channel and headed toward Sarasota John's houseboat was going through the draw in the Cortez Bridge.

On the spur of the moment I had the bright idea of racing John Ringling's boat back to Sarasota. So I meandered up into the pilot house and asked the captain if he wanted anything. He said no thanks.

I then went aft on the boat deck where Mrs. Charles was still knitting. I told her I had just come from the pilot house and that the captain had asked if it would be okay to pass the other yacht in this narrow channel. After a while she looked up from her



knitting, saying, "John, it is all right if we win."

With those words I made a beeline back to the Captain, telling him that Mrs. Ringling would love to pass the other yacht and if he could do the trick. With those words the Captain rang full speed ahead on both engines.

It seemed we could not gain on the other boat until after we had gone through the Cortez Draw. Then we could see the other boat was coming closer to our boat. The captain of the *Zolophus* must have realized what was occurring as his boat started to pick up speed. As the boats came closer together I recognized Mabel Ringling among a group of women who were watching in the other yacht. Charles Kannelly, John Ringling's private secretary, was standing on the aft deck with one end of a docking rope trailing in the water for one of our sailors to grab so they could pull us into Sarasota. Both crews were having a big bang out of what was now a race between rival crews.

It seemed we could not even attempt to pass the other boat. During this time I was in the pilot house with the first mate and Captain. I was sort of egging on the Captain to do something before we reached Sarasota. In his southern drawl he said not to worry and that I could tell Mrs. Charles that he would start to pass Mr. John's boat as they were passing the Charles Ringling home.

With those remarks I rushed down the steps and gave Mrs. Charles the Captain's message and suggested we go to the bow of the boat to have a better view; then it came back to me about the channel and turning basin in front of what was to be the John Ringling home.

Sure enough, all of a sudden we heard the bells ring in the engine room. The Captain must have rang for full speed ahead. The yacht seemed to shudder and then jump like a greyhound. As the Captain had remarked we were now passing the Charles Ringling home. The yacht made a straight line toward shore where the turning basin had been dredged. At a distance we drew astern, then broad

John Ringling's houseboat *Zolophus* docked at the Sarasota city pier. Pfening Archives.

side. We had passed the *Zolophus* and were heading back into the intercostal waterway channel. The first mate in the pilot house was tooting the whistle for all the noise that it could give forth. John Ringling's large house boat could never pass us now. Soon we left her far astern. We had gone through the old wooden causeway and were docking at our berth on city pier as the *Zolophus* was rounding Golden Gate Point into her dock at the sunset apartments.

A few days after the yacht race the captain of the *Zolophus* came over to pay us a visit. He was still hot under the collar and said in so many words that it had been unfair, that there had not been any effort on his part to make a race as we had done. If we wanted to race against his boat he would gladly accommodate us at any time out in the Gulf of Mexico. He said he would personally cover any wagers we cared to gamble on the winner.

Even at this late date I get the shudders when I relive what I did that day on the yacht. One word from either the Captain or Mrs. Charles would have cooked my goose. Neither person had known that I promoted the race that day on beautiful Sarasota Bay.

Symphonia Potpourri.

All members of the crew were outfitted from head to feet. All they had to bring aboard were toilet articles, underwear and socks. The captain and the two engineers were furnished with a two-pants suit of dress blues and a cap. The cook and the messman also had dress blues and work clothes. The mate and sailors had dress blues and work clothes. Yours truly had dress blues and whites.

Soon after the yacht arrived in Sarasota Mrs. Ringling came aboard and asked me if I had ever made beds. I said I had made a few, but never anything fancy, like on a yacht. So we went below to the owner's quarters. She went to the linen closet and took out a mattress protector, two sheets and two pillow cases. She picked the stateroom to hold school.

All of the beds, or berths, were built into the side of the boat. The owner's and guests' staterooms had berths built in a box like shape. Underneath each berth were built-in drawers the entire width and depth. In the enclosure was a box spring and mattress.

Mrs. Ringling showed me how to pull out the mattress about half way, then start to make the bed, using a contour sheet, a top sheet and a light weight woolen blanket. She was very precise about pulling the covers tightly, saying that a nervous person could not sleep if there were wrinkles in the bed. She then had me make the bed a couple of times. Before she left she told me it would be a good idea for me to practice in my spare time.

I did not have the berths made up all the time. The Ringlings always gave me plenty of time to make up the beds and get supplies before they arrived for a trip.

We never served any elaborate meals or gourmet foods on the yacht. The food was good and wholesome as you might find in the average home. When the owners were aboard breakfast was ala carte. They could choose whatever they wanted and there was no set time, come when you felt hungry. The Charles Ringlings were the early birds. They would be up and around before any of the guests. Many a time they would have finished their breakfast before eight in the morning. The others would straggle in until almost noon.

Lunch aboard the yacht was light and served around one o'clock in the afternoon. Tuna or salmon salad with saltines was the most often served. Then, of course, we served the old reliables, corned or roast beef hash with poached eggs, frankfurters with potato salad, macaroni and cheese. Any left over meat would be diced and boxed together with home made noodles.

Dinner or supper was the main meal of the day. It was usually a long, dragged-out affair. The men and women would dress for this meal, even though it was not formal. Dinner was served around seven o'clock in the evening. The Ringlings and their guests would start to gather in the large living and music room. It was not unusual to put together a musical. Mrs. Charles and her daughter Hestor were excellent piano players. Hestor was also an excellent singer. Mr. Ringling was a gifted musician on the violin. If their son Robert, a noted silver-voiced tenor, was present he sang from his repertoire of opera and drama music. When he gave forth in song it was heard all over the yacht.

During one of the first meals I

served on the boat I started to go below for something that was missing. Mrs. Ringling called me back and said that while people were sitting at the table my place was in the dining room and not the galley. It was after that they had the buzzer and voice tube installed.

Dinner was a full course meal consisting of soup, main course of fish or meat, fresh vegetables, salad, and dessert. After dinner coffee was served in the music room. We always had a variety of meats, roast beef, pork, veal or lamb. Baked ham with sweet potatoes was a favorite. On occasion we served a large stuffed fish. I don't remember ever serving poultry or game, nor any fried meat like pork chops, steak, veal cutlets or lamb chops. We did serve old fashion pot roast, pork spare ribs, but never with barbecue sauce. Meat loaf, beef stew with plenty of vegetables, swiss steak, corned beef and cabbage with boiled potatoes, hot buttered beets, stewed onions and carrots, stuffed double pork chops, and baked veal cutlets were served now and then.

There was never was an electric vacuum sweeper aboard the yacht, not that they could not afford to buy one. I had asked Mrs. Ringling at different times to get one for me, but she always gave me an evasive answer. So most of the wall to wall carpet was done with a whisk broom and dust pan.

John Ringling never came aboard the yacht during my tenure. His wife Mabel was aboard twice, one time to inspect it when we first brought it down from New York. The other time was when Mrs. Charles gave a card party and tea for a group of women.

Mrs. Ida Ringling North was only on the yacht one time. That was the same time that Mabel Ringling came to play cards. Nephew Richard T. Ringling was never aboard, but his wife Aubery also attended the card party. John, Henry and their sister Salome North were aboard the yacht only one time, that was for an inspection tour.

There was no refrigeration aboard. We did have a large ice bunker that came in handy. Frozen foods had not become popular at that time and I am sure the Ringlings would not have used them anyhow.

Charles Ringling would never install a ship to shore telephone. When someone asked him his reason he replied, "I have my boats to take my wife and I away from all the hustle and noise of modern days." Then in the same breath said, "I get all of that during the circus season. When we come aboard our yacht we are in a different world."

In February of 1924 the Ringlings

had a disastrous fire in the paint shop of the Bridgeport winter quarters. The paint shop was on the second floor of the largest building in quarters. They had an old-time hand-operated freight elevator to take the wagons up and down.

The loss was enormous. Mr. Ringling did not know anything about the fire for almost two weeks. He had been down in the Ten Thousand Islands and up the Shark River with a large party aboard the yacht fishing for tarpon. Doing a little hunting, at night they would put out shark hooks for the sharks that the river teemed with day or night.

When he called home to have George bring the car to Fort Myers, he received the news about the great fire in Bridgeport. The yacht was supplied with a large radio in the pilot house but it never was used. The only remark Mr. Ringling made about the fire was that there were competent men at winter quarters to take care of the damage and knew what to do. He also said, "My brother John was no doubt in Bridgeport soon after the fire."

Pay day was always a big day for the crew. If we were berthed at the pier or coming home from a trip, some of the boys had already made plans for what they were going to do with part of their paychecks. Tampa, located about fifty miles from Sarasota, was likened to Mecca in Saudi Arabia. Most of the crew had been born and raised in these parts of Florida.

At that time Vincent Lowe had the Sarasota yellow cab franchise. He would take four or five of the crew to Tampa and return for twenty-five dollars. The round trip to Tampa was a thing out of this world. With luck it would take three to four hours, if you did not have a any car trouble. The highway had deep ruts for most of the journey. Getting out of the ruts to pass or let another car pass was suicidal. We were always glad to see the huge wooden arch over the road saying we were entering Hillsborough County. It was a cement road from there into Tampa.

I will never forget one of our trips to Miami for the opera season. With all the staterooms occupied I had to put Clyde Ingalls, the side show manager and a personal friend of all of the Charles Ringling family, in the small stateroom that was for the maid. She did not make this trip as she would always get sea sick and make more work for me.

Mrs. Ringling had brought aboard a good assortment of liquor. We had rounded the west coast of Florida and gone through the Jew Fish railroad bridge then into the intercostal waterway. We were proceeding into Biscayne Bay. It was another nice warm Florida

day. Boats of all sizes could be seen. Mrs. Ringling spotted a coast guard cutter that at a distance but was running parallel with the yacht. Of course this was during prohibition. She was worried that they might stop the yacht and search for contraband and had me put all the liquor into a large hamper, bring it on deck and take it forward to the chain house hole. If they came along side I was to break all the bottles and throw them overboard. It was a false alarm as the cutter turned around and went back the way it had come.

Mrs. Charles planned a card and tea party on the yacht. It was to curise up Sarasota Bay as far as Anna Maria Island and then return to her berth on City Pier.

The gardener of their estate brought twelve card tables and about fifty folding chairs. A few days before the party Amos the cook made small cookies in his spare time between feeding the crew. Amos decorated them with small colored icing designs. He made anchors, flowers, clowns, elephants, ships and even a suite of playing cards.

The day of the party dawned cold and windy. Mrs. Ringling sent word that they would play cards while the yacht was tied to the dock. She advised she was bringing the house maid and their woman cook to help Amos and me. Mrs. Ringling and her people arrived early and in no time we were busy setting up tables and chairs. Since it was so cold and windy we could not set up any tables on the aft deck, as had been planned. We placed the tables in the pilot house, dining room, living and music rooms. It was a tight squeeze, especially in the pilot house, where we had five of the twelve tables.

The guests started to arrive soon after lunch. It looked like someone had opened the Blue Book of Sarasota society. As usual, the maid was of no help to me in the pilot house as it was too windy for her to carry anything up the outside stairs. So I had to serve the pilot house and also look in elsewhere to make sure everything was running smoothly in the rooms on the main deck.

The women folks were moving from one table to another. Toward the end it seemed all the Ringlings, Mrs. Charles, daughter Hester, son Robert's wife, Mrs. Mabel, Audrey and Mrs. North, ended up in the pilot house. I remember Mrs. Samuel Gumpertz was one of the guests. In spite of the weather it turned out to be a very successful afternoon.

1896

Another show of 1896 that was poorly recorded by the Kansas press was Campbell Brothers.

Some time during the week of May 18 Campbell Bros. played Axtell.

"The Campbell Bros. enormous ten cent show which was here several days this week attracted considerable attention," according to the Axtell Anchor. "The show is a good one, considering the price of admission. The performances are good, in fact everything is up to date."

The show played two days, Thursday and Friday, June 25 and 26, at Morrill. It was "A Good Show," according to the Morrill News,

"Although they put out no expensive paper, no gaudy three-sheet posters with pictures of beautiful faries dancing through the atmosphere, yet Campbell Bros. are all and more than they claim to be.

"They showed yesterday afternoon and last night in a crowded canvas and put up a show that is seldom equalled by any twenty-five cent attraction. Owing to the price being so low, ten cents, many were at first inclined to look with grave suspicion upon it as a first-class snide but after seeing the afternoon performance everybody decided it was a good thing. They will show again today and tonight and will have a crowded tent."

The exhibitions at Muscotah on July 28 were reported by the Muscotah Record: "Campbell Bros. aggregation of startling wonders has come and gone. They pitched their tent on the lot just west of the city park last Tuesday. At 2 P. M. the large parade appeared on Main Street, which consisted of a band wagon and about forty little kids of all colors, who brought up the rear. The performance was quite good, the admission price being only 10 cents. Some of the showmen looked as if they had never seen a bath tub. They had poor attendance."

The Osage City Free Press disposed of the show in one sentence. "Campbell's 'Enormous' show gave exhibitions in the city Monday and Tuesday." The dates were August 21 and September 1.

The first word of the coming of the Queen City Circus to Mound City was a two-column advertisement, July 2, in the *Torch of Liberty*, one of the villages two newspapers. Circus day was Saturday, July 4.

ONLY BIG SHOW COMING

The Crowning Climax of Exhibitional Grandeur

Vol. IV, Chapter VII, Part Two

By Orin Copple King

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A handout in the *Torch* claimed to be a quote from the Webb City, Missouri, *Daily Register*: "The Queen City Show has come and gone. It is in Joplin for the next three and then goes to Galena. It is a good show in every respect; and for the price of admission the audience sees a one-ring performance the equal of one ring in any three-ring circus charging 50 cents admission. Prof. Mayo's troupe of performing horses are intelligent animals that readily obey the will of their master; Burt Mayo is an excellent bare-back rider; Coco Herbert wins unbounded applause as a clown; Emma Reydon is a clever aerialist; Clyde Phillips is a novelty either at walking the slack wire or in his juggling tricks; Rosa Naynon, on the flying perch, did some difficult feats."

The Queen City Circus never reached Mound City.

According to the *Linn County Re-*

This advertisement appeared in the *Mound City Torch Of Liberty* on July 2, 1896. Kansas State Historical Society.

public, Mound City's other newspaper, "The circus failed to put in an appearance, that is they couldn't as their band attached the whole outfit at Fort Scott. Quite a number were disappointed as the circus was said to be a good one."

The show was billed for Ft. Scott, Thursday, July 2. A story in the Ft. Scott *Semi-Weekly Monitor* on July 4 explained the difficulty: "An act not down on the program

happened just after 'All out and over' had been announced at the performance of the Queen City Shows last evening, when Constable James Bryden served attachment papers on Wm. Mayo, manager of the show and proceeded to take possession of the outfit on attachment papers issued in a suit brought by the members of the circus band for back salary.

"The suit is entitled J. H. Grill vs Wm. Mayo, Mrs. Wm. Mayo, Bert Mayo and Morris McClure and is for \$276.46, the amount the band claims is due them. J. H. Grill who is named as plaintiff in the action is the band leader. The serving of the papers caused quite a commotion and for a few minutes all the circus people tried to talk at once, and it looked as though some of the employees of the aggregation would come to blows.

"After some discussion it was seen that the matter could not be fixed up before morning and Constable Bryden left a guard over the tents and property on the lot and also over the twenty horses in the Travis stable.

"From members of the band, which is composed of Joe Chartrand of St. Joe, J. H. Grill, Al White and J. S. Hart, C. J. Bennett and W. S. Wade of Mound City, Missouri, and Geo. Ford of Hamburg, Iowa, it was learned that the show owes the band seven week salary, minus a very little that the members have drawn and that the amount now due is \$276.46. The boys claim they have been promised money several times but never got it although the show has been playing to good business. They also have a letter from a party that was with Mayo last year in which he states that he lost some \$80 salary. It is also understood that the show owes Clyde Phillips and wife and Coco Herbert and wife, performers, several weeks salary, while the canvas men, hostlers and working men, it is said, are all without money.

"The band men are confident the Mayo's have money, and that the



GRAND GALA DAY

Mound City, July Fourth.

The Queen City Circus

And a Grand Celebration.

The Queen City Show is the largest popular priced amusement institution exhibiting in America.

\$10,000 Troupe of performing horses and ponies.

20 male and female artists, embracing the world's champion riders, leapers, tumblers, animalists, gymnasts, and a school of fear defying athletes; altogether presenting a program of unexcelled excellence.

MAMMOTH ONE RING CIRCUS.

Prof. J. H. Grill's Celebrated Band of Solo Musicians.

Carry the news and tell your neighbors that this mammoth show will exhibit at

MOUND CITY

JULY 4.

Two Performances Daily 1 and 7 P.M.

affair will be settled out of court this morning. It is said that the Morris McClure mentioned in the suit is a wealthy Springfield man, who is backing the shows and that May can get the money if he has not got it himself. J. I. Shepard is representing the band men and it is very likely the matter will be settled today as the show has several important dates it cannot afford to lose.

"The show was billed for Fulton today [July 3] and was to have appeared at Mound City, Kansas, the Fourth."

The *Monitor* reported July 8 that, "The performers and band of the Queen City shows which was attached by the band for \$276, gave a benefit performance at the circus last Saturday evening and secured about \$30. The attachment which was held against the show property was relieved Sunday and the tent taken down. In Justice Corywell's court yesterday morning the band took judgment for \$276 against the Mayo's and McClure and it is thought the money can be collected. Most of the show people have left for their homes."

Willie Sells and his partner J. N. (Jap) Rentfrow in 1896 exhibited their New Great Syndicate Shows in five Kansas towns. The show was "Exalted in Aim and Pure in Tone," for it was "The Mighty Monarch of All Tented Exhibitions! Its Record Unimpeachable! Imperishable! Unblemished! Above the Reach of Jealous Rivals!"

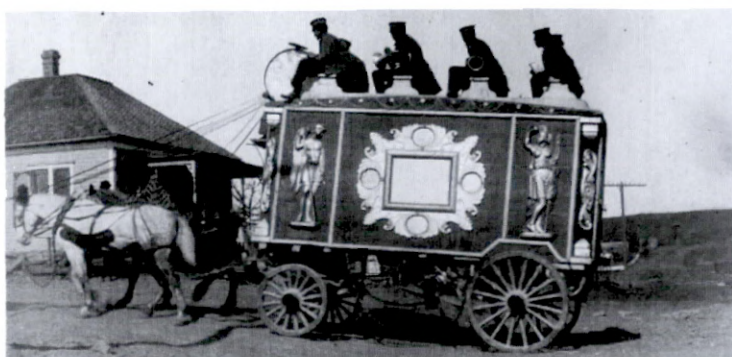
The first town to see Sells & Rentfrow's paragon of virtuous wonder was Goodland in the far northwestern corner of the state. The date of exhibition was Monday, June 1.

Newspaper advertising began May 14 in the *Goodland News* with a two-column ad which also appeared May 21 and 28. Two performers were mentioned, "RICARDO, THE STRONGEST MAN ALIVE," and "THE MOST WONDERFUL MAN ALIVE, PROF. P. H. ROYAL."

Prof. Royal at eleven a. m. daily accomplished on the show grounds the most "Hazardous and Life Defying Feat of Leaping from a portable tower 100 feet high to the earth below, making two complete revolutions in the air."

"FREE AS THE AIR YOU BREATHE. \$1,000 will be paid to any other show producing this Marvelous Feat. The salary for the feature alone costs \$1,000 per week."

Fortunately for the Great Syndicate Ben Wallace, who also had a high diver, did not accept the \$1,000 challenge.



This tableau wagon on the Great Syndicate in 1898 came from the Adam Forepaugh show. It is shown here on Campbell Bros. in the early 1900s. Albert Conover collection.

According to the *News* the Great Syndicate had an unusual advertising feature. "Next Wednesday [May 27] the circus will have its colored band here as an advertisement for the show, June 1."

"The negro band that was to be here yesterday will come Saturday and can be used for Decoration day purposes," the *News* reported on the 28th. There are no reports that the band ever appeared and there is no mention in any of the other Kansas towns.

A handout used in every town appeared in the *News* on May 24. "Wherever the New Great Syndicate Shows and Paris Hippodrome has exhibited this year, it has drawn crowded tents, thus proving that the new organization has secured the public's fullest approval. The new organization is composed of the very best and most widely experienced showmen of both Europe and America, and is under the capable direction of Mr. J. N. Rentfrow, a manager of extensive experience and preeminent ability. As per press notices of all cities where it has exhibited, the show is one of the best that travels, and has firmly established its reputation to present one of the very best and cleanest entertainments. The circus is given simultaneously in three rings and on two celebrated (sic) stages. The hippodrome track is a quarter of a mile around, which encircles the rings and used for the races and Olympian sports.

"The menagerie department is very fine, embracing a large and costly variety of wild beasts. One of its most interesting features is a flock of huge African ostriches, which the management purchased at a costly outlay. The Great Syndicate Show is the only circus exhibiting such a feature. This show exhibits at Goodland Monday June 1."

The menagerie also had a rare three-horned CLYPTOCOM. One of the eternal duties of an advance agent is to get the city license reduced regardless of

how small the amount may be. "The city council met Monday night and placed a license of \$25 on the coming show which the showmen think is too high. It was the intention of the council to prevent them from coming here by putting up the license so high. The agent for the show told us that they could not afford to pay more than \$10, which was all small towns ever de-

manded, and if the license was made more here, they would pitch their tents south of the railroad tracks, outside of the corporation, and thus avoid paying any license."

The *Goodland Republic* warned its readers, "A Gang of Shell Game Workers Coming With the Circus."

"Monday is circus day, and a word of warning to those who believe themselves possessed of enough acumen to wrest the hard-earned dollars from the thimble-rigger man be in order. The *REPUBLIC* has received reliable information that there are many of these slick-fingered gentry accompanying the show and that they are very proficient in the art of making the gullible bank heavily on an optical illusion.

"The shell game is of very ancient origin, having originated in the antediluvian epochs. Noah sheltered it in the ark among his numerous curiosities, and Ham, sometime after the subsidence, won the savings of his father and brethren by the skillful manipulation of the shells and pea. The game has ever since flourished best where the elephant and lesser curios are gathered together for the amazement of a humbugged public.

"The game is a lead pipe cinch for when the rigger 'sets' his shells the delusive pea is snugly ensconced between his first and second fingers and all attempts by the unsophisticated to locate it on the board ends in disaster."

To further strengthen its warning the *Republic* ran a bit of doggeral:

"To all foolish people who think they are so wise,

"That to beat the shell and monty game is just about their size;

"A word of warning in their ear THE *REPUBLIC* would shout: "That the thimble-rigger'll get them.

"If They Don't Watch Out!"

After show day the *News* reported, "As advertised, the big show has come and gone, and it was really a good performance. The street parade was about as good as anything we have seen here. The streets were lined with people to see it and the town has not

been so full of humanity for many a day. Had they all gone to the show the big tent would have been crowded. One wondered that there were so many people in the county. The larger part of them, after seeing what they could of the parade, the man make his leap at the show grounds and the wonderful pictures of the side show, left for their homes. We hope next year their financial condition will be such that they can take in the whole shooting match. The attendance was good in the day time but at night those who were there looked lost in the tent.

"We are under obligations to J. H. Phillips, press agent, for good seats, general information and a band serenade in front of the office.

"Sheriff Dustin put a stop to the shell game men but there were devices that caught the usual number of victims. Although this paper warned its readers that circus games always won for circus people, yet there were several who tried to make us out a liar, and got it in the neck. Geo. Spun lost \$27, Joe Kolacny, \$2.50, Andy Kaiser, \$9 by trying to accommodate a showman with a \$10 bill in exchange for change. J. B. Moore also got caught on the change racket and was done up for \$4, but by an accident got his money back. A man from Norton county on his way to Colorado got caught for \$17, and several others for small amounts."

The weather in Goodland fluctuates radically. The area is generally the hottest or the coldest in the state. The *News* remarked that on Friday before show day the thermometer reached 100 degrees, but on circus day overcoats were needed.

The *Republic* generally agreed with the *News*. "The Great Syndicate circus which showed in Goodland Monday, while not up to its billboard representation, was a fairly good entertainment. The street parade was very creditable and the performances in the show itself were excellent in many cases. The menagerie was very small.

"Early in the morning teams loaded with sightseers streamed in from every road, which in Sherman county invariably lead to Goodland. There were a goodly number of visitors from Wallace and Cheyenne counties, Kansas, and from Kit Carson county, Col., who helped swell the crowd considerable. When the show opened in the afternoon the seats in the big tent were crowded with spectators and many were standing. Besides the crowd in the big show the side show and the grafters were entertaining a select audience of that class of people who

insist upon monkeying with buzz-saws and playing jokes on tigers, elephants and other savage curiosities from far away jungles.

"Quite a few were 'shortchanged' in the main show by a skillful manipulator, but if the victim discovered the deception in time to find the artist he would disgorge with that debonair complacency which bespoke the Chesterfield.

"The evening show was poorly attended and the programme was cut considerably short."

Rock Island engine 811 "hailed the circus train from Roswell, Col., to Phillipsburg. The engine crew is now figuring on attaching a calliope to the exhaust pipe and having music of their own."

An attractive full page profusely illustrated ad ran in the Colby *Free Press* on May 21 and again on the 28th, heralding the exhibitions of Tuesday, June 2. A two-column ad was carried in the Colby *Tribune*.

The *Free Press* published a handout used in every Kansas town.

"INTERESTING BIRDS.

"Giant African ostriches are a great curiosity and but few of them have ever been seen in this country and they lived but a short while owing to the rigor of the climate. The big birds usually called ostriches, now so extensively bred on the so-called ostrich farms of California,

A portion of an 1896 Great Syndicate newspaper advertisement. Circus World Museum collection.

The Great Syndicate Shows.

POSITIVELY THE ONLY BIG SHOW COMING.

3 Ring Circus, Double Menagerie and Magnificent Racing Hippodrome.

THE BIG CITY SHOW OF THE WORLD.

Increased in every way except in price of admission. More trained animals, more horses, more novelties, more new and novel features, more acts and more people than any other show that has ever visited the coast.



VICTORIA, THE RIDING BENGAL TIGER.

The most novel and sensational act ever presented in a circus ring. The acme of animal training, illustrating the subservience of brute nature to human intellect, certainly the sight of a life time. Its like never seen before.

3 Rings Always Full of Attractions 3

are really not ostriches. They belong to the same species but are a mongrel branch of the true family. Its native place is Australia and not Africa and the bird is really an emu and is only about half the size of the ostrich and has not the brilliant plumage of the latter bird.

"The only flock of African ostriches in America is owned by the Great Syndicate Circus whose well known circus exhibits in Colby on Tuesday, June 2nd. Six of them were imported by these managers and they are a wonderful feature. Each is as large as a horse and can easily outrun that animal.

"This popular circus is a three ring show and it also has a great hippodrome track on which exciting races are run. This year prices have been reduced to fifty cents for adults and 25 cents for children."

Following the exhibitions at Colby the *Tribune* stated that, "A large crowd attended the circus Tuesday. The catch games did not enjoy a very large patronage in our city as too many object lessons have taught heretofore."

"The circus has come and gone," according to the *Free Press*, "and very few complaints are being made about the shell game. A good crowd was in attendance, but the performance was the same old chestnuts found in circuses."

The Norton *Champion*, reporting the exhibitions of June 3, ran a press agent's review of the Great Syndicate. The story named several performers.

"Harry King and Paul Devene executed the high, return aerial act in the most pleasing manner. Miss Effie Dutton as a rider of bareback horses established a reputation which will never be forgotten by those who witnessed her clever and graceful work. Francis Reed and little Miss Pauline Dutton also accomplished most marvelous performances as riders. The Livingston family of trick bicyclists are certainly wonders of the age in their line, they introduce many seemingly impossible feats during their entire 20 minutes (sic) turn. Mrs. Hobson and her two babies tackled the vast audience while executing their thrilling and beautiful posturing act these babies are the youngest performers in the world in their difficult line. Miss Louise Bolten, a wee tot of 5 summers, as an equestrienne received the heartiest applause of the day. Pretty Louise distinguished herself by bringing her naughty little pony Jess, under subjection and causing the latter to

perform many difficult feats and cute antics. The Aerial, bounding rope juggling, rolling ball and in fact everything attempted was skillfully and neatly accomplished. The Hippodrome races were exciting and provoked much laughter."

Two interesting stories appeared in another column of the *Champion*. "Willie Sells was with the circus yesterday, and many local ring experts say it is his show. Sells wired for Fred and Frank Castle of Norcaturo to come down for a visit. Castle Bros. years ago when Willie was a lad essaying the first ring performance of 'skinning the cat' these brothers were masters of high tumbling. All of them were together with Barnum, Forepaugh and Adam Sells in their different dynasties as Kings of the circus. Ole Nelson tells us all of them learned the art at Galesburg, Illinois, Ole himself being a performer doing the daring and difficult feat of rolling a little ball under the other shell against the money and opinion of Reuben."

"A teacher of the male line was asked by a showman to exchange a ten dollar bill for silver, offering as inducement to make the exchange two reserved seats. The teacher got in his mit (sic) ten silver dollars for which, after a second count for especial assurance, he handed the showman a ten dollar bill. 'Say,' said the showman to a capper, 'Have I a right to give a seat without pay?' 'No,' said the capper. 'Then give me back my silver,' he said to the teacher handing him back his bill. The silver was returned. After a late inspection the bill showed up to be a dollar bill. Shy nine dollars."

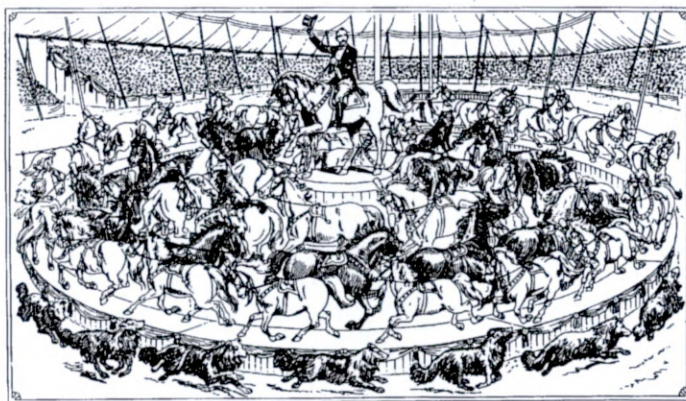
At Phillipsburg on June 4 the ladies of the Christian church served lunch and ice cream in the basement of the Cummings building. The ladies advertised that, "Fifteen cents pays the bill."

The Phillipsburg *Dispatch* warned its readers that, "When you leave your home today see that the doors and windows are all securely locked. If there are not a lot of thieves following the circus which visits our city today, it will be an exception to all shows. The thief gets his work in while the parade is being made."

The only thievery reported was the act of a Phillipsburg man and the Great Syndicate was the victim.

"When the circus, which exhibited in this city last Thursday had left town and were beginning their work the

next morning at Mankato, they missed two sets of their heavy brass mounted harness. They immediately telegraphed to Marshal Gray informing him of the theft and also notifying him that a suspicious looking colored man with whiskers had been seen about their barns, while here, after night. Upon receipt of the telegram Marshal Gray went to the residence of W. C. Coleman, of this city, and found the harness all hanging up in good shape. He took the harness and sent them to the circus people on the next train. When seen, Mr. Coleman admitted stealing the harness, but claims that he stole them to get even, he claiming that one of the fakirs following the show beat him out of 50 cents. Coleman tells just such a story about losing the 50 cents as to convince one that he didn't lose anything, but simply took the harness to show that he did not allow an opportunity of that kind to pass."



"The Great Syndicate Circus and Paris Hippodrome visited this city last Thursday," according to the *Dispatch*, "and was a much better show than many of our people expected. The street parade was very good and encouraged many to attend who had really not intended to before. The menagerie was fairly good. The great majority of the animals were not very rare specimens, but it was on the whole very fair. The circus performance was given in two rings and on an elevated platform, and throughout was a very good performance, some parts being fine. The hippodrome races at the close of the circus performance were quite exciting as such sports usually are."

"The fakirs and gamblers who accompanied the circus were also artists in their line, and relieved many of our farmers of their surplus hog and corn money. If reports be correct the gamblers reduced the surplus of a number of our farmers, but we have always noticed that the farmer or cheese man who lost money on any of these games expected when he invested his money, to double every dollar invested."

The *Western Advocate*, Mankato, carried an ad and three handouts before the exhibitions there on June 5, but following circus day made no mention of the Great Syndicate.

The last word on the Kansas tour was the following which appeared in the *Sabetha Star*, June 12: "The residents of the south end of town had a free show, Sunday morning, [June 7] as the Rock Island hauled the special train of the Syndicate Circus Co. through here, bound from Fairbury, Neb., to Marysville, Mo. They had a special train of 17 cars of their own, hauled by two engines and looked like a rather tough outfit so we can pardon them from passing through here without stopping long."

Prof. Lockhart whose elephant act was a circus staple played one week beginning Monday, August 24, 1896, at the Fairmont Theatre in Ottawa. Matinee prices, adults 25 cents, Children 15 cents; evening prices 25 cents and fifty cents.

One of the world's great horse trainers played a two-day stand at the Rohrbough Theatre in Ottawa on March 30 and 31, 1896.

Advertised in the Ottawa *Daily Republican* for two evening performances and one matinee was Bartholomew's Equine Paradox, Horses, Ponies and Dogs assisted by Charles Geyer's Musical Specialty Company. A parade was offered at noon on Monday. Prices, 25 cents, 35 and 50 cents. After the opening night the *Republican* reported, "THE HORSE SHOW."

"A sea of expectant faces greeted the rising of the curtain for the Bartholomew horse show at the Rohrbough last night. And nobody in the audience was disappointed. It was a marvelous exhibit of what can be accomplished with animal instinct under the hands of an intelligent trainer. Horses were there that seemed endowed with almost human powers of comprehension and reasoning,—horses that were individually dexterous and collectively perfect in evolution."

"The most astonishing feats were performed as by rote and the program is so arranged that the entertainment is attractive as a play. A troupe of trained dogs adds variety and new wonder to the program."

"This afternoon at 4 o'clock there was a matinee for the benefit of school children particularly. This evening a regular performance as usual."

Buffalo Bill with his deep frontier roots was to the people of Kansas more than a celebrity, he was an old friend warmly welcomed by countless of his cronies and those who falsely claimed to be.

The season of 1896 was the first appearance in Kansas of Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World. Cody honored only three Kansas towns, the first of which was Leavenworth on October 17.

"George Goodhart, manager, and a crew of advertising men for Buffalo Bill's show are at the Hotel Imperial," the Leavenworth *Standard* reported on October 7. "The men are with advertising car No. 2."

Also in town on the 7th was Major John M. Burke, head of the show's press department. Burke's duty was to impress upon the citizens, according to the *Standard* that, "'Billy' Cody, as it used to be, is coming with his exhibition in all the magnitude and grandeur that made it famous the world over—in fact the same size as at Chicago's World's Fair—500 horses, 600 men."

An advertisement presented the following roster of features: "100 Indian Warriors; 50 American Cowboys; 30 Mexican Vaqueros and Ruralies, 30 South American Gauchos, 50 Western Frontiersmen, Marksmen, etc.; 25 Bedouin Arabs, 20 Russian Cossacks of the Caucasus; U. S. CAVALRY; Royal Irish-English Lancers; French Chasseurs; German Cuirassiers; Petit Corps D'Armee; all under his command of COL. W. F. CODY (Buffalo Bill)." Also on the program was "The Last of the Buffalo, Only Herd on Exhibition."

Cody offered a program "TOO PRODIGIOUS FOR RELATION."

"100 Scenes! 500 Animated Tableaux! 100 Living Kinetoscopic Pictures."

It was all to take place before a "COVERED GRAND STAND, SEATING 20,000 PERSONS."

Ordinary shows offered a street parade, but Buffalo Bill presented a "FREE STREET CAVALCADE."

Also mentioned in the ad was Buffalo Bill's Cowboy Band.

Performances were scheduled for 2 o'clock and 8 p.m.

"A Brilliant Electric Display Making



Cover of 1896 Buffalo Bill show program. Pfening Archives.

Night as Light as Day" was promised for evening exhibition.

General Admission 50 cents, Children under 9, 25 cents.

The *Standard*, an evening paper, on show day ran the following: "The feature of the morning in Leavenworth was Col. Cody's cavalcade or street parade, the like of which the people never before saw. The cavalcade loomed up at Sixth and Delaware Streets a few minutes after 10 o'clock. Buffalo Bill in his trap in the lead holding the reins over a span of beautiful white horses and attended by his footman. Col. Cody appeared perfectly serene, though he shot inquiring glances from one side of the thronged street to the other in search, no doubt, for familiar faces. An old friend dashed out from the crowd occasionally to shake the distinguished frontiersman's hand which he extended gracefully. As he passed James W. Brown's stable Col. Cody raised his sombrero (sic) to his old and valued friend. Occasionally along the line of the parade he raised his hat in recognition of applause from the admiring crowds.

"The street parade was exceedingly interesting because of the originality and numerous striking features; such as cavalry of nations, cowboy bands, Mexican vaqueros, cowboys of the west and Indians. It was a veritable cavalcade of horse back riders representatives of great nations. The Indians were in war paint and feathers and the squaws drew their blankets closely about them to keep out the frosty air.

"An old stage coach was a feature of the parade. It was drawn by six magnificent black mules driven by Thomas P. Diehl of this city. The crowds cheered Mr. Diehl as the coach rolled by. Many of them did not know the merchant policeman was a noted stage driver in the early days. It had been a long time since he held so many ribbons, but the way he handled the six was a caution. On the boot was 'Colorado Jack' a noted character who in the early days drove an Overland Mail coach on the North Platte. Mr. Diehl and Col. W. F. Cody were on the Overland Mail at the same

time. Mr. Diehl had not seen 'Colorado Jack' since 1861. It was Col. Cody's desire that Mr. Diehl drive the coach in the parade for the sake of old times that can never be lived over again.

"An immense crowd is enjoying the great Wild West performance on the reservation [Ft. Leavenworth] this afternoon and this evening at 8 o'clock an even larger audience is expected. The show is something that nobody feels like slighting.

"Dexter W. Fellows, press representative of Col. Cody's show, arrived here last night and has been bustling ever since. It is his duty to look after the newspapers of a town or city visited and see that the show is not slighted. This was not necessary in Leavenworth, as Buffalo Bill is too well known here to need any extra strokes of the pencil."

The parade was a bonanza for pickpockets, but not all were successful.

"Three more alleged pickpockets were jailed this morning by the police. During the Wild West parade Fifth and Delaware streets while a lady was attempting to get near the street crossing a pickpocket made a grab for a small bag she held in her hand. The

woman jumped and screamed as the thief caught hold of the bag. At that moment the butt of Detective Jone's revolver fell with a thud upon the head of the thief and sent him to his knees. The detective turned him over to Officer Williams who locked him up. He gave the name of Alfred Alley. The detective with Officer Williams locked up two more alleged pickpockets during the parade. They are registered at police headquarters as J. A. Parker and C. H. Morrow. All three of the above are strangers."

The crowd watching the parade was uncomfortable due to a heavy frost.

The Topeka State Journal announced on the Fourth of July the coming of Buffalo Bill: "Topeka is to have the famous Buffalo Bill's wild west show."

"The advance agent is headed this way, and is expected here in a day or two to make the necessary arrangements. The date will probably be in August."

"This is the show that Mr. Peter Sells says is the second best in the world."

"This is the order of excellence, according to Mr. Sells statement: Barnum-Bailey, Cody's Wild West, Sells-Forepaugh, Ringling, Wallace."

The Journal picked up a story from Toledo, Ohio, July 16: "Buffalo Bill's bandwagon was driven under the Fort Wayne railroad bridge at Massillon at 11 o'clock and all the occupants scraped off. The injured are: David Keene, driver, broken leg; P. Reichia, crushed and bruised; Alfred Vitelli, collar bone broken; Nuiseppe Laure, chest crushed, will die; Flocco Domenica, injured over heart, may die."

"The wagon was drawn by eight horses which got beyond control of the driver. Mr. Cody is doing all possible for his men."

More misfortune was reported in the Journal August 15: "Muskegon, Mich., August. 15.--The main arena tent of Buffalo Bill's wild west show was wrecked here last night by the southern edge of a cyclone which struck shortly before 7 o'clock."

"The full force of the wind, which was accompanied by a deluge of rain, struck the long tent near the main entrance."

"The wind rent great gashes in the canvas, tore out the tent fastenings and blew the seats into the are-



Lithograph used by Buffalo Bill in 1896. Circus World Museum collection.

na. For a moment the air was filled with flying boards. The employees had been using their utmost exertions to keep the people out of the tent, and in their efforts some of the men were struck by the flying seats."

"The entire outfit was so badly demoralized that after a council it was decided to omit the performance and move on to Benton Harbor. It is estimated that the gale caused a loss of \$5,000 to \$6,000 to the show."

The first newspaper advertisement heralding the exhibitions in Topeka of

The Buffalo Bill white ticket wagon in the Bridgeport, Connecticut winter quarters in the spring of 1896.

the Journal on October 3 and again on the 10th, 17th and 20th. The ad offered the public a new service; riders could check their bicycles on the show grounds.

When the show played St. Joseph, Missouri on October 16, Cody was arrested for exhibiting without a city license. At a hearing it developed that the show had a license for a side show, for which it had paid \$20, whereas the license for a circus and equestrian exhibition was \$250.

"Mr. Cody," the Journal reported, "claims his show is not a circus and a continuance of the case was granted to allow him to engage counsel. He says he will take the case to the highest court in the land before he will pay license for a circus exhibition."

A handout in the Journal October 19. claimed, "The exhibition will be given in the largest entertainment arena in the world, and seating capacity will be provided for twenty thousand people, who will be sheltered amply from rain or sunshine. At night the arena will be lighted most brilliantly by an electric outfit of 250,000 candle power, the largest portable apparatus of the kind yet manufactured."

"The delay in Buffalo Bill's parade this morning," according to the Journal, "was unavoidable and Colonel Cody was very sorry about it."

"We were late in getting out of Kansas City last night," said he to a Journal reporter today, "and were consequently late here. That threw us behind for the pa-





The cowboy big show band as pictured in the 1896 Buffalo Bill route book. Pfening Archives.

rade. We had bad luck with one of our horses, Plute. You know when we load we run them up on a runway and there is a small tin lamp at each runway to light the way. Some how the old boy slipped and falling from the runway struck on the lamp, smashing it and firing the oil which spread over his side. The men, who didn't understand just exactly what to do undertook to put the fire out by fanning it with their hats. Of course that made it worse and now the animal is in bad shape. We worked with him some time. Oh, he'll live, but we can't work him now.'

"Plute' is one of the bucking horses used by one of the cowboys.

"I couldn't give him to the ordinary man,' said Colonel Cody, 'but he's all right for my business and I wouldn't take \$5,000 for him.'

"Colonel Cody is as fine a specimen of physical manhood as one could well imagine. His pictures are like him except that his long hair and his mustache are gray. But he bears his 50 years as lightly as though they were but 30. His eyes are of the kind that novelists describe as gray and piercing. He still wears the broad white hat of the plains, but otherwise dresses in the Prince Albert style.

"He carries his own private car

which is a hotel in itself. His wife travels with him. The show itself requires 48 cars. It came from Kansas City this morning and goes to Fort Scott tonight on the Missouri Pacific; Friday, Sedalia, and Saturday, Moberly, where he closes the season.

"Topeka never saw a parade of the kind he gave here today.

"He himself drove ahead of it. The bands were cowboy bands and the cowboys, Mexicans,

Cossacks, Gauchos, Arabs, scouts, guides,, American Indians, and detachments of fully equipped regular soldiers of the armies of America, England, France, Germany, and Russia, each mounted and in full uniform that made up the parade on horseback were the real article and not merely 'dressed up' Americans.

"You could hear a dozen different languages spoken at the camp which is at the fair grounds.

"The show carries its own electric light plant and arc lights line the arena. The star features, perhaps, are Johnny Baker and Miss Anna Oakly [sic], the famous rifle shots. Miss Oakly is a pleasant little lady and Baker is boyish looking and amiable. Each of them was busy 'loading.' They do not trust the preparation for their 'act' to assistants.

"The show carries 560 horses and Col. Cody knows almost every one of them by name.

"He is just at present what the west calls 'under the weather.' For the past week or more he has not been well physically and he is much worried also about his partner in the enterprise, Nate Salisbury, who is seriously ill in Chicago.

"Col. Cody's home is in North Platte, Neb., and he was given a hearty ovation when he showed there last week. Col.

The side show personnel as pictured in the 1896 route book. Pfening Archives.



Cody himself appears in all his performances."

On show day the *Journal* was loaded with notes on the Wild West exhibition: "There are plenty of chickens on the market in Topeka today. The reason: Buffalo Bill's wild west is in town, and the farmers are here to see it.

"There are some Indians in town today that do not belong to Buffalo Bill. They are from the reserve and came down to see what Indians 'in captivity' look like."

"This is the last week of the Buffalo Bill Wild West show on the road for this season. The show will close Saturday night at Moberly, Missouri. The foreigners with the show will leave immediately for their native lands and the stock and other property of the show will be shipped immediately to Bridgeport, Conn., to remain during the winter."

Following the exhibitions the Topeka *Daily Capital* reported, "Whenever a friend comes to call on Buffalo Bill the scout always breaks a bottle.

"Yesterday he opened a bottle of Excelsior Springs mineral water. His callers were Major Henry Inman, Mr. Paul of Pauline and a *Capital* reporter. One of the first things that Col. Cody did when he got into town yesterday morning was to send for Major Inman.

"I was on his payroll when he was quartermaster for Phil Sheridan,' said Cody. 'He was a brave and intelligent gentleman and was well liked by Gen. Sheridan. I want to talk with him about the book he is writing.'

"It was after the afternoon performance that he was entertaining in his dressing room. But Buffalo Bill's tastes are somewhat more furious than mineral water, and he stopped bathing his eyebrows and luxuriant gray mustache, goatee and hair with cologne long enough to haul a black bottle from a chest.

"It isn't often I drink,' said he, 'but when I do I want something that I know will not kill me. A man like me has to have something up here,' and he placed his hand on his chest. He was not surprised when Major Inman and other guests did not join him.

"Buffalo Bill spoke feelingly of a Mr. Majors, who had given him employment when only 8 years old, as a messenger carrying bills of lading from one government wagon train to another. This was dangerous work, and Mr. Majors got \$40 a month from the government for the boy, the same as a grown man. This \$40 a month was mighty handy to Cody's mother, as they were needy.

"I met Majors in Denver recently,'

said Cody. 'He took care of me when I was a kid, and by heaven I'm going to take care of him now that he's old.' 'Is he still giving away Bibles?' asked Major Inman.

"No, but I don't think he used to do that to excess. Some of the fellows used to read them sometimes, and I don't believe they ever did us any harm. I never would have read one if it hadn't been given to me, that's sure."

"As the party broke up a photographer got Cody to pose for him, and the colonel insisted on Major Inman being in the picture."

Following show day the *Journal* had much to report: "If Buffalo Bill's grand stands held 20,000 people, then at least 10,000 saw last night's performance. There were really about 6,000 people there."

"The Wild West show was well protected yesterday afternoon, for a Topeka man said he counted fifteen uniformed policemen within the enclosure at one time."

"The four Indian squaws who rode in the stage coach in the parade yesterday all chewed gum frantically, almost like all the young men do at the theater, nowadays."

"There was a bad place in the arena at the wild west show last night on which no less than fifteen horses slipped falling on their riders. One man, a French soldier, had to be helped from the field."

"Three men have died during performances of the wild west show during this summer season. All were very old men and died in the audience. At Rochester, N. Y., two died during one afternoon performance within a few minutes of each other. All died of heart disease."

"James Anderson, who is general superintendent of Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, formerly lived in Topeka and was the proprietor of a transfer company. He left Topeka to become the partner of Wallace in the show business but they quarreled and Wallace now has his show alone."

Anderson managed Sells Brothers second show, Anderson & Company, out of Topeka, in 1878 and 1879.

"The stagecoach that Buffalo Bill uses for his blood curdling attack with Buffalo Bill to the rescue, is not the old original stage coach that saw the real thing on the plains and that the 'crowned heads of Europe' rode in. The original is in the Smithsonian institute. It was a question of keeping the old coach from falling to pieces and a new one had to be substituted."

"The Wild West men said that Topeka was the only place they played

this year where there was not some kind of fight or riot."

"Who would have thought it? A special policeman's pocket was picked while he was in a crowd at Buffalo Bill's show lot. He saw the man moving away rather suspiciously and pursued him. What was his surprise to see the man throw his own watch down and make his escape. The special picked up his own watch and forget the thief."

It was the opinion of Topeka's *Daily Democrat* that, "Not more than 4,000 people attended the afternoon Buffalo Bill show yesterday."

The *Capital's* last word on Cody's extravaganza was, "Some thought when Annie Oakley, 'Little Sure Shot,' grabbed the hat from the head of an assistant at yesterday's performance and tossing it in the air, perforated it, that it was a little mirthful deviation of her own. But it is in the act that is down on the bills."

"Annie Oakley has been shooting publicly for a salary for thirteen years. Her folks are Quakers, and they never saw her shoot until last Fourth of July. They were thunderstruck."

"She uses 2 3/4 grams of Schultze powder in six pound, E-gauge hammerless guns in her work at the traps. She shoots live birds as well as clays, and in trying a new Griener at Kansas City Tuesday morning she killed twenty-three out of twenty-five pigeons."

The Ft. Scott *Semi-Weekly Monitor*

Annie Oakley, a feature of Buffalo Bill's show. Pfening archives.



following the exhibitions of Thursday, October 22, published a review providing a few details of the performance.

"IT BEATS A CIRCUS."

"The inclement weather had very little effect upon the greeting that Buffalo Bill received Thursday upon his first visit to this city. Thousands stood in the rain to witness the parade and catch a glimpse at the famous plainsman, and at both performances he received an ovation." After a brief description of the parade the *Monitor* continued: "The performance was more remarkable than the parade. The program very patriotically opened with *Star Spangled Banner* by the cowboy band, and when 'Old Glory,' carried by Color Sergeant Paul Weinert, who carries a medal for bravery at the battle of Wounded Knee, appeared the audience gave an enthusiastic burst of applause."

"The introduction of all the rough riders was the first feature. The last to appear being Col. Cody himself, who rode to the front of the splendid representation and with a sweeping stately salute with his sombrero (sic), introduced his company, which immediately broke into groups and went through an extremely pretty grand march."

"Little Annie Oakley [sic] followed with some astonishing feats with the rifle, revolver and shot gun. Missing a couple of difficult shots she laid down her gun and ran quickly around it, which seemed to have the desired effect, for at the next trial she made square hits."

"Jonnie Baker, the young American marksman, also gave an illustration of how he could break glass balls, no difference in what position he was placed."

"There were races between the different riders and attacks on the emigrant (sic) train and Deadwood mail coach, also a representation of the Indians on the march, pitching their tents, and giving the war dance, all interesting and exciting."

"The Arabs are gymnasts as well as horsemen, and give a fine exhibition of their skill. One of the fellows carried a pyramid of eight grown men, and the gun spinning of several of the party was marvelous."

"Fully as interesting are the Cossacks, and their riding was thought by some to be the most daring of the lot."

"The exhibition of the lasso throwing by the Mexicans was wonderful, the leader being able to rope a running horse by one, two, three, or four legs, or around the neck, as desired."

"The work of the cowboys in riding

the bucking broncos was perhaps the most amusing performance. The animals are spoiled through carelessness in breaking, and rarely get over the 'bucking' habit. There are a number in the show and they put the cowboys on their metal to saddle and mount them, but once on the daring riders could not be dismounted.

"After the cowboys came Buffalo Bill. Though 61 years of age, he is apparently as keen-eyed as ever, and speeding his horse around the arena broke glass balls in profusion.

"The next act was a buffalo hunt, in which the Indians and cowboys took part. This was followed by the attack on the settler's cabin, and once more the army of rough riders rode into the arena, saluted, and the great show was over."

At each of the three Kansas towns, the show was plagued with pickpockets and robbers. At Ft. Scott, the *Daily Tribune* related some of the depredations: "Fort Scott was a mecca for pickpockets and burglars yesterday, many professional men in these lines have preceded or followed the Wild West show here. Many cases were reported to the police and probably many were not.

"One of the boldest acts was that of picking the pockets of Roadmaster J. J. Jamison, of the M., K. & T., as he was in a crowded car coming from the show last night. He did not miss his pocket book until later. It contained \$4 or \$5 in cash, annual passes on the M., K. & T., Missouri Pacific and Memphis railways, a sleeping car book and a note for \$125.

"An old gentleman named Diamond was robbed in a crowd on Market Square, but his pocket book was recovered from the fellow who was arrested, charged with picking Mrs. Creamer's pockets as reported yesterday.

"N. P. Loveall, of the east side, while on a crowded car going to the show grounds, was relieved of his pocket book containing from \$12 to \$15. He discovered the loss upon arriving at the grounds.

"In a crowd at the corner of Main and Wall streets, Henry J. Butler's pocket was found by one of the 'profess' and his purse, containing only \$1.50 was stolen by deft hands.

"J. S. Padgett was on the same crowded car in which Mr. Butler was robbed and when the conductor called out, 'Look out for pick-pockets' after hearing of Mr. Butler's robbery, he felt for his purse and found that it had been stolen. It contained between \$3 and \$5, and was in his front trouser's



Johnny Baker the young marksman with Buffalo Bill in 1896. Pfening Archives.

pocket. He thinks the thieves got off at Second street.

"The residence of D. L. Conway on the north side was entered yesterday morning and several articles of value were taken. Among them was a shot-gun.

"Before 10 o'clock last evening it was discovered that Hafer's tailor shop on Wall street, had been entered and an investigation disclosed the loss of about fourteen bolts of cloth valued at from \$150 to \$200. The burglars had entered through the front door which had been unlocked. It is Mr. Hafer's belief that the thief must have been in the store sometime during the day, and raised the floor-bolt which fastens one of the doors. This door is never unlocked and upon closing the store last night the fact that the bolt had been lifted was not noticed.

"When Peter Riley returned to his home east of the city yesterday, he discovered that his house had been entered and robbed of some clothing and jewelry. He saw a fellow whom he suspected and followed him to town. Officers House and Dennen shadowed him and finally arrested him in the free silver headquarters, where he was reading. He wore two pair of trousers and carried a razor. He is a stranger and his actions were suspicious. Mr. Riley identified him."

The shows of James A. Bailey were noted for the absence of fakirs and thieves. Bailey controlled the Buffalo Bill show, but the pickpockets surpris-

ingly flourished. Was James Anderson lax in his management or was the close of the season so near as to make a clean up not worth the effort?

A handout quoting the journalist Opie Reed was used in each of the three Kansas towns. The praise he heaped on Buffalo Bill was ludicrous.

"If man's greatest study is man, of what worth has 'Buffalo Bill' been to the student? Strip him of romance, of history, and regard him simply as a collector of the human species, and then note the distance he advances beyond any 'showman.' When Barnum gathered wild beasts from the dark corners of the earth wise men applauded, for they declared that he had brought home to every child the truth of natural history.

"And what has 'Buffalo Bill' done? He has opened a great school of anthropology, and not only royalty but wisdom has been forced to applaud. Surely his entertainment is the greatest that the world has ever seen, and could it have been possible in the vigorous days of Rome, had this mammoth play been enacted in the neighborhood of the eternal city, the school boy of all nations would today translate the wonders into his mother tongue. Morse made the two worlds touch the tips of their fingers together. Cody has made the warriors of all nations join hands. Who but this man has conceived so fantastic a play? In one act we see the Indian with his origin shrouded in history's mysterious fog, the cowboy-nerve-strung product of the new world--the American soldier, the dark Mexican, the glittering soldier of Germany, the dashing cavalryman of France, the impulsive Irish dragoons and that strange, swift spirit from the plains of Russia--the Cosack.

"'Buffalo Bill' has taught the knowing world a lesson. It was a bold thing to undertake, but this man from the west did it. There often arises a man who makes the world think, but how few have made the world stare? In years to come when Cody has passed away, hundreds of imitators will arise to scramble and to strive for a semblance of his marvelous force, but he cannot be approached, for history has marked him as one of her children. Columbus discovered America. The centuries rolled one upon another and a man from the western plains completed the discoverer's work--brought a band of Indians to Rome."

And they all lived happily ever after.

Research funded in part by grants from Wolfe's Camera & Video, Inc. Topeka, Kansas.

Mike Martin's CIRCUS HOBBY HALL

Brand New Items for the New Year!



Sarasota International Circus Festival Official Souvenir Video

"1995 Sarasota Circus Festival Highlights"

For eleven years the folks of Sarasota have put on quite a party celebrating their rich circus heritage. Enjoy two hours of highlights of the fabulous "Big Top Talent Competition" with the finest in international acts, the outdoor Thrill Shows and much more!

These tapes are the "OFFICIAL VIDEO" created for the festival and are AVAILABLE ONLY from the Hobby Hall. So sit back and enjoy the circus - Sarasota-style!

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Original Circus Stationery Sheets in Gorgeous Full Color!
Package includes:

Beatty-Cole	RB Circus World
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Ringling/Barnum	A Dozen in All!

\$10.50 Per Package Postpaid

1936 Circus/Carnival Magazine

Here's another real find! This 68 page gem is loaded with detailed information on over two dozen Circus, Carnival and Wild West shows touring in 1936. Photo illustrated with routes, equipment and show performances covered. Shows include:

Seils-Sterling	Lunsford Wild West
Rubin and Cherry	and many others

MINT COPIES! LIMITED SUPPLY POSTPAID \$15.50
LAST CALL ON THESE!

1945 R/B Route Books - Last Call!

Celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of "The Greatest Show on Earth". From 50 years ago, these photo and story-filled books are loaded with nostalgia and historical information.

Book contains the program of the '45 performance, list of personnel, a day-by-day diary, feature stories by Bev Kelley and the complete routes of the Barnum show 1871 - 1918.

MINT COPIES - LIMITED SUPPLY - Postpaid \$ 16.50

1947 R/B Route Books - 1st Time Listed!

The '47 season is well remembered as the year Johnny North signed more than 40 first-time-in-America acts. The tour returned to mostly one day stands and the first fleet of show-owned air conditioned sleepers were added to the train.

These photo and story filled books are loaded with nostalgia. Each contains the route, personnel and performance of the tour plus historic itineraries of the Adam Forepaugh Circus and its predecessors 1878-1911.

MINT COPIES - LIMITED SUPPLY - Postpaid \$ 16.50



R/B Program Packages - "Last of the North Years"

Here are five mint editions from the final Johnny North seasons including: '62, '63, '64, '65 and '66. Super years with great performers - Harold Alzana, Zacchini's Cannon, The Bokaras, Klauser's Bears, The Bisbini Family, Hanneford Troupe, Charles Moroski, Galla Shawn and countless more!

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CIRCUS LIFE AND ADVENTURE OF ADAM BARDY

Every so often, story books are written that tell of someone who has lived an interesting and adventurous life, and there are times that some local person may come along who has experienced such an adventure in his life's journey. Of local interest is the story of Adam Bardy, who began his "adventure" in 1915, at the age of 8, running away with the great Buffalo Bill Wild West Circus, when the Circus was playing in his home town of Webster, Mass.

This beginning adventure was of very short duration, as Adam met up with gypsy fortune tellers the very next day, and, in their generosity, they gave Adam trolley car fare money, and Adam returned home.

In Adam's teenage years, he lived with woodchoppers in shanties in the woods, and finally in a deserted farmhouse. At the age of 17, Adam joined the Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey Circus. Other large and small circuses were to be Adam's life, until, in 1929, Adam met up with Kentucky Mountaineers, and the life of a bootlegger was to begin. A thrilling adventure as a big-time bootlegger was Adam's lot in life, until the Conn. State Police wiped out the operation. Adam escaped from custody, and a fugitive's existence lasting seven long years began. During this time, Adam learned all about fortune telling, a life he followed for many years. After those seven years, Adam gave up and turned himself in to the police. He went on to raising beautiful meat and show rabbits, and became New England's largest rabbit breeder. Then he went back to doing character readings, using palm readings and handwriting analysis by mail.

But, of all Adam's adventures, his memories of circus life were the best, including the opportunity to have had personal friends like the great Tom Mix, who joined the Sells Floto Circus when Adam was with that circus in 1929, and Adam's interest in boxing, which his good friend Tom Mix really loved.

And now, as Adam lives his quiet life out in the country, he has written an interesting book that tells of his 47 years with his wonderful late wife, Ann, who was a devoted and loving mate. The story tells of what it was like to live with a fugitive and bootlegger husband all those years, and then of her passing in 1980. Adam recounts his loneliness for three years. Adam continues his story by telling how the palmistry reading of a young 21-year-old girl blossomed into a wonderful friendship of true love and romance, as it can come to one who has lived an adventurous, interesting life. The story explains how, through deep faith in God, Adam could live this strange, unusual and interesting life, so full of excitement, and still remain the happy-go-lucky person he still is. Adam credits all this to the guiding hand of God.

The interesting life story of Adam includes that of his close companion, 22-year-old Terry Lyn Bates. Her story alone is well worth the price of the book, as one can see that age alone is not what counts, but the way we live our lives.

The book includes many pictures that tell the life story of Adam. For an autographed copy of "Circus Life and Adventure of Adam Bardy," send check or money order for \$12.95 to:



**ADAM
BARDY**

Ex-Circus Man, Ex-Pugilist,
Ex-Still Operator, Bootlegger,
Fortune Teller, And Author.



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